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Editorial

The last copy of the 125th year of publication of the main Slovene journal for the area of education, which first used to be published under the name the *Popotnik* (the Traveller) and in the last 60 years as the *Sodobna pedagogika* (the Journal of Contemporary Pedagogy), provides an extraordinary variety of topics, presenting the contents of present research endeavours in the area of education. This copy intentionally does not have a so-called central topic, following the idea of bilingual copies in order to represent achievements and situations in the area of pedagogics to local readers as well as to English speaking readers.

Nevertheless, the articles in this copy can be divided into a few complexes whose common denominator remains the care for increasing the efficiency and quality of work in educational institutions.

The first complex treats work in primary schools, especially the relations problems between school and parents. The text, treating the partnership between teachers and parents, reveals that the main motive for the cooperation is mostly children's feelings at school and relations between children in the class, which indicates the existence of parents' care and their sense of responsibility for educational efficiency of primary school. On the other hand, the data show also an increasing need for parents' cooperation and help in pupils' learning work. This demands a suitable qualification for cooperation of parents as well as teachers, who can plan their work by including also parents' cooperation. However, there is an open question what such work planning means to children whose parents are less educated. According to the research findings, these parents feel less competent to help their children. This is the reason why the need for qualifying parents and teachers for a suitable cooperation and creation of conditions of school's educational and learning efficiency is even greater. Thus, the data from other national spaces are being proved in the Slovene pattern. According to these data, the appropriate parents' inclusion provides concrete results also in the area of learning success. A suitable family environment remains the most significant supporter of the individual's optimal development, to which we should pay more research and educational attention.

The following article is also a part of the same empirical research, in which the woman author analyses how teachers and parents see each other. Based on the empirical data, she concludes that teachers and parents do not attribute sufficient competence to each other, which is the condition of accepting each other as partners in their common endeavours. Since the research is about finding out the interviewees' opinions, the actual (mis)trust between both groups can be considered only indirectly. Based on the teachers' opinions whether parents can be parents, we can indirectly conclude if there is the lack of trust between parents and teachers. Similarly, a lower degree of education does not tell us anything about the experience that less educated parents had with their teachers, when they were included into education. Nevertheless, we can agree

with the woman author that mutual trust is a condition for a suitable cooperation and that parents should be attributed a more important role in solving problems, which arise from common work, when educating children.

The third published article is also connected to the described problems. The women authors research the role of kindergarten and family environment as a predictor of children's speaking competence. This research also points at the extraordinary parents' role, this time regarding children's speech development. The women authors state that parents' education and family environment, together with sex and intelligence, are a significant predictor of children's speaking competence. Therefore, it is reconfirmed that, the same as in the first two articles, parents and family environment are of extreme importance for children's development.

The second complex of articles deals with the area of vocational and technical education and training. It treats the study of this segment of the educational system from two points of view: its contribution to the justice and social inclusion as well as legitimacy of education in connection to the processes of vocational socialisation. The group of authors illuminated activities and trends in the area of vocational and technical education and training in Slovenia. From the profusely documented analysis, it can be found out that in Slovenia as well as in other comparable countries, this segment of education is increasingly less attractive and that the registration index into the programs of vocational and technical education is decreasing. Even more worrying is the finding that those who finish the secondary vocational education, passing their vocational Matura show a great interest in further education. A lot of them actually do continue their education at the tertiary level. The system certainly enables such continuation. Transitions from vocational direction into the general one are possible also after finished secondary vocational level, either so that vocational secondary school graduates pass the general Matura or by passing another additional subject from the general Matura. However, they do not equal to grammar school graduates, but they are able to continue their education in the university programs, providing such a possibility. It is evident that educational currents are influenced by other non-school factors, mainly social reputation of vocations and pay policy, which clearly favour professions at the tertiary level. Since the problems are complex, the authors do offer several measures, which may lead to the change of currents and to the revalorisation, consequently increasing the attraction of vocational education. Between these factors, there is an outstanding suggestion for a bigger program flexibility, which could be, according to the authors' opinion, enabled by a unified vocational school.

The text, treating vocational education and the legitimacy of education in vocational education, is in the light of the previous article even more interesting, since it interferes with the question of the internationality of the socialization process in vocational education. It rejects the orientation where vocational education is in a way covered with substitutional expressions, such as vocational socialization or socialization (instead of educational) objectives. Certainly, such a change requires a deep reflection on the aims of this education segment, espe-

cially social inclusion and on ethics and vocational values, which are specific for a particular vocational environment. Therefore, a constant attention is required to this socially curtailed population, included into vocational education. With planned educational work, it should not get even more marginal. It is by means of vocational education that this population is supposed to develop a suitable (vocational) identity and thus its own social promotion.

The last complex of articles is, concerning contents, more varied. The first article is of methodological nature, pointing at the importance of triangulation for ensuring the quality of research findings of qualitative research. Since qualitative research is increasingly included in researches of education in Slovenia and the trust in qualitative methodology is still little, due to frequent simplifications in the frame of methodological approach, triangulation, treated in the article, represents the approach to the increasing trust, as well as a methodological guidance for the researchers, employing qualitative methodology.

The next article deals with the terminological and consequently conceptual question of museum pedagogy, pointing out problems regarding this expression, which has been nevertheless in use for a long time in our country as well as in the international space. The article is especially interesting because it shows that semantic undefining cannot be solved by means of etymological analysis of employed words, but only by thoroughly defining the concept itself, in our case – the concept of museum pedagogy. From this point of view, it can be understood also as an article for an international discussion or for the conceptualisation of museum pedagogy.

The last article in this copy researches authority, treating its role in the educational concept of public school. By means of the concepts of theoretical psychoanalysis, it studies the mechanisms of establishing authority, its role as well as its functions in establishing Ideal self. The article reveals that for the educational efficiency of school, pupils have to be placed into the social net, based on clear rules, defined beforehand, which cannot be arbitrarily adapted. This can be reached only by mutual coordination and agreements, engaging all participants in the educational process.

Although the copy, as we have already said, is not thematic, it is possible to identify the common section of the published texts. They all focus on the existing situation in education, illuminating it by means of a proper scientific discourse and solving conceptual dilemmas. Besides, they implement and explain methodological approaches, which provide the reflexion of the existing pedagogical practice in national and international space.

Dr Janko Muršak, Editor

Dr Jana Kalin

Teacher – parent partnership in the light of ensuring better pupils' learning achievements

Abstract: In this paper, we try to determine to what extent co-operation between teachers and parents, as well as the involvement of parents in their child's school work both at home and at school, contributes to better learning achievements of that child. Furthermore, it is important to determine how the involvement of parents and co-operation between teachers and parents should be carried out to ensure optimal results. In the first part of this paper, we present conclusions of studies of this question performed abroad, while in the second part we will interpret some of the findings of the study we carried out on a representative sample of primary school teachers and parents of primary school children. We wanted to determine the importance of various reasons for co-operation between teachers and parents from the point of view of both teachers and parents, in relation to the child's learning achievements, his or her wellbeing among school mates, and the teacher-pupil relationship, as well as to determine what attitudes teachers and parents have in relation to the burden parents feel due to their child's school obligations, and to what extent parents can help their child prepare for school, in the teachers' and parents' opinions. This paper opens new questions on the possibilities and the strength of co-operation between teachers and parents and on the necessary mechanisms for the parents to be adequately involved, which bring concrete results in the area of child's learning achievement.

Key words: co-operation of teachers and parents, partnership, involvement of parents, learning achievement, optimal development

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Introduction

The basic trend of contemporary co-operation between teachers and parents is to ensure and encourage their partnership. This influences the change of forms, methods and the content of work with parents, and impacts the formal organization and development of a more genuine relationship between teachers and parents. A partnership gives parents more rights, thus increasing their responsibility for their child's socialization and home studying (Resman 1992, p. 35). In their care for the child, the school and parents should build a partnership, since their mutual tie and common interest is an individual, supported by parents at home and by teachers at school. Burden (1995, p. 196) specifies the following reasons for working with parents:

- Establishing open, two-way communication,
- Understanding (and reacting to) pupils' domestic situations,
- Providing parents with information on the school's expectations, events and on the pupil's behaviour,
- Involving parents in school work,
- Informing parents of expectations concerning discipline and measures taken in this respect,
- Encouraging parents to assist their children with school work.

Of the reasons provided, quite a few are closely related to the teaching process and the child's studying in general. The basic aim of co-operation and partnership between teachers and parents is to enable the child's most optimal development, and to ensure good performance in various areas. The child's future life and his professional career will also depend on this co-operation.

Establishing a partnership depends on the school's type, its level and aims, as well as on its orientation (greater orientation in socialization or greater concern for learning and learning achievements) and expectations. The expectations of schools, teachers and parents are never identical, but can be more or less co-ordinated (see in more detail: Kalin 2001, Kalin 2003). This involves many objective and subjective circumstances which encourage or hinder their co-operation.

What involvement of parents means

Involvement of parents can be understood in a number of ways. Some use this term as a synonym for co-operation, participation of parents, parents' authority, and the partnership between the school, family and the community (Epstein, 1996 in Soo-Yin, 2003; Wolfendale, 1989 in Soo-Yin, 2003). The involvement of parents may take various forms and be of different levels, both in and out of school. It includes all activities the school facilitates and stimulates, supporting parents in their actions, with the aim of improving the child's learning and development. Epstein (1996 in Soo-Yin, 2003) has expanded this concept from the »involvement of parents« to a »partnership between school, family and community«, in order to put special emphasis on the fact that each child learns and develops within three contexts: the school, his family and the wider community. All three contexts shall be taken into consideration as a whole, since they are expressed as such in the education system and the learning process of each individual child.

It is important for every school to encourage and facilitate teacher – parent partnerships, which increase the involvement of parents and their participation in encouraging the social, emotional and intellectual development of their child (Children's Defense Foundation 2000, p. 64 in Soo-Yin, 2003). School, parents and the community should be aware of their interaction and should together create a vision and understand the role of individual factors in relation to the roles of others. Such co-operation is necessary to ensure the support and the assistance which every child needs to succeed at school.

Pomerantz et al. (2007, p. 374) emphasize that there are two distinct types of involvement of parents in the education of their child: involvement at home, and involvement in school. *Involvement at school* requires direct contact between parents and teachers, or the school, such as: co-operation in parental meetings and consultation hours for parents, attendance at school events or voluntary activities at school. Research conducted in the USA (U.S. Department of Education 2006 in Pomerantz et al., 2007) indicates that around two thirds of parents – regardless of their ethnic origin – were included in school work through parental meetings and school events. This is surpassed by the involvement of parents with higher socio-economic status and higher formal education. Less frequent, however, is the involvement of parents as volunteers, especially among less-educated parents and those belonging to other linguistic and cultural groups (ibid.).

The involvement of parents at home represents parents' activities in relation to school, which take place outside school, but not necessarily at home. Such activities may be directly linked to school, such as assisting the child with his school obligations, providing good learning conditions, ensuring an adequate place to learn, providing assistance in home assignments, giving advice on the selection of elective subjects, reacting to the child's learning efforts (assistance in the selection of project topics and seminar papers, test achievements) and discussing school matters with the child (what has happened at school, the im-

portance of working at school, etc.). The characteristic of the involvement of parents at home represents also the child's involvement in intellectual activities (reading books with the child, visiting libraries, museums, galleries, and so on) which are not directly linked to school as such. Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994 in Pomerantz et al., 2007) called such activities cognitive-intellectual involvement.

The two forms – integration at school and integration at home – may of course be directly linked to each other and intertwined. Parents may participate in two ways – at home and at school by using two basic models: the model for development of skills, and the model for development of motivation (Pomerantz et al. 2007, p. 376).

The skill development model includes the development of cognitive skills (e.g. linguistic skills) and metacognitive skills – learning planning, monitoring and self-control. There are several reasons why the involvement of parents may positively influence the development of these skills in children: parents obtain appropriate information on how and what their children learn at school and this can be used when helping their children develop their abilities, while parents in this manner get to know their child's abilities and are able to offer the child suitable assistance at the level which will ensure their optimal development; at home, parents may facilitate learning from practice and experience. Some authors (Epstein and Becker, 1982 in Pomerantz et al., 2007) also stress that when parents are involved, teachers give more attention to development of the child's skills and become themselves even more involved.

The motivation development model means that involvement of parents encourages the child's achievements, because it gives the child different sources of motivation, such as monitoring his academic achievements, or positive perception of his or her abilities. If parents participate in the child's life at school, they emphasize the value of school for the child, which helps him view school as important; in the course of time they may be able to internalize school values as such and their learning may become internally motivated to a greater extent. Parents, together with their actions, present them a model for how to control developments and make positive changes. Through involvement of parents, children are also more familiar with school tasks, which may lead them to believe that they are able to solve academic tasks (Pomerantz et al., 2007).

Parents may provide sources which influence the development of skills and motivation in children, and also help them develop skills, which in turn enhance their motivation.

Advantages of involving parents in school – what research indicates

Several researches into the involvement of parents and their impact on their child's learning achievements have been carried out from the early eighties of the past century (Pomerantz et al., 2007). Research was conducted in two basic directions – studying of the actual integration of parents and re-

searching the interventions/initiatives aimed at encouraging the involvement of parents. The first type of research revealed that the involvement of parents in school benefits the child in regards to his achievements; however, researches on the involvement of parents at home are less consistent regarding positive effects. Since the involvement of parents at home is one of the oldest forms of involvement for the majority of parents, it should give rise to the question what type and manner of co-operation brings the best results. Researches into various initiatives, with the aim of encouraging the involvement of parents, show lesser influence than those on direct involvement of parents. It is true, however, that there has not been enough relevant research in this area in order to come to any certain conclusions.

Research into the involvement of parents, where teachers and parents continually support and encourage the child's learning and development, shows positive effects on children, family and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1979; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Henderson, 1987; Illinois State Board of Education, 1993, all in Soo-Yin, 2003). As Henderson and Berla (1994) state, the most appropriate indicator of pupil's success at school is not the financial or social status of his family, but the degree to which the child's family is capable of:

- Creating a family environment which encourages/supports learning,
- Expressing high (but not unreal) expectations for their child's learning achievement and his future career,
- Getting involved in the child's school and community education.

Henderson and Berla (1994) have examined and analysed 85 studies concerning the advantages of involving parents in the education of their child. Well-planned and successful involvement of parents has positive effects on the child and parents, as well as teachers and the school as a whole. The advantage for the child lies in his endeavour to achieve better learning results, in higher consistency of homework and his attendance at school, his increased self-confidence, in higher self-discipline; he also shows higher aspirations and school motivation. The positive attitude of a child towards school is often manifested in his improved class behaviour and as a decrease in the number of discipline problems.

An advantage for parents who are more closely connected with their children and have frequent conversations with them is in that they become more sensitive to their child's social, emotional and intellectual needs. In addition, parents have more confidence in their parental role and decision-making skills, and after obtaining better insight in the child's development, they use more methods of positive encouragement and less punishment, and better understand the teacher's work and the school curriculum. If parents know what their child learns at school, they will be more willing to actively take part in working with their child at home, when teachers expect it. The view of parents on school improves and closer inter-relation and sense of belonging to the school are established.

The benefits for teachers manifest largely in the professional work of teachers and headmasters, in improved communication and relationships between

parents, teachers and school head staff, in teachers and headmasters better understanding the cultural setting of each family, and being able to create deeper respect for parents' abilities and their time. Teachers and headmasters also report greater professional satisfaction.

Schools that actively involve parents and their communities have a better reputation in the community and enjoy greater support, while school programmes that encourage and integrate parents usually have better performance and achieve higher quality than those not including parents.

Researchers have confirmed that overall involvement of parents represents a positive contribution to learning and the learning achievements of children and adolescents (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997 in Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005, p. 100). Studies including pupils of different ages show that learning results are better when the family is actively involved (Henderson and Berla, 1994 in Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005). These studies prove there is a close relation between the involvement of parents and the learning achievement of pupils, their wellbeing, attendance at school, views of pupils, their homework assignments, school marks and their educational aspirations. This also links to higher learning achievements of pupils, the time spent for their homework, a more favourable attitude towards school and lower number of pupils who quit school (>dropouts<).

In their study, Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2005) made a comparative analysis of the research and noted a significant interaction between parent involvement and pupil motivation. Due to greater involvement of parents, pupils have demonstrated greater efforts, concentration and school attendance. Pupils were more interested in learning and demonstrated better achievements. Pupils whose parents get involved assume a higher degree of personal responsibility for their learning. When parents are interested in the education of their children, pupils develop more target-oriented learning, in which they look more for challenging tasks, persist in academic challenges, and are satisfied with their school work.

There are of course several reasons for such results, as they also have several implications. We can search for these reasons in various directions (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005):

1. *Involvement of parents contributes to pupil's self-control of learning and to a realistic perception of his or her learning capacities.* When parents represent a source of pupils' home activities, the school and home environments become closer. The child feels more confident when facing learning activities at school. Parents may support their child in shaping new strategies of action. When the child sees an example in his parents as trustworthy learning partners, he is able to better judge his own abilities and actions (Adunyarittigun, 1997 in Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005, p. 118).
2. *Involvement of parents provides a sense of security and affiliation.* When children encounter intellectual, social and personal challenges on a daily basis, their parents set them limits, provide encouragement, and act as a source of knowledge. Parents taking part in school activities show how

important their children are to them (Grolnick and Slowiaczek, 1994 in Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005, p. 119), which is an extremely important message for the child to receive.

3. *The involvement of parents helps pupils internalize educational values.* Through their involvement, parents communicate to their child how important education is for them. Pupils' motivation increases when they see their parents take an active role and show an interest for school. This is a home-based support system which stimulates the value of education. When pupils see that their parents value the importance of school efforts and achievements, they are also more motivated and have higher perception of their learning capacity (Marchant et al., 2001 in Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005, p. 119).
4. *A pupil's motivation enhances parent involvement.* Parents may get more involved when they believe that their children are motivated; likewise, a motivated child may demand greater involvement of parents.

Pomerantz et al. (2007) conclude their extensive study of various researches into the involvement of parents with the observation that adequate involvement of parents has an impact on higher learning achievements of the child, his mental health, and is a positive contribution to the child's emotional and social development.

Despite the fact that many teachers and schools have accepted the concept of involvement of parents and are aware of its impact on the child, many of them have not as yet transferred this knowledge and belief into practice. A number of studies confirm that parents are interested in co-operation at all levels, from attending individual events to decision-making at the school level. Many parents often still do not know how to enter into co-operation. It is, therefore, more a problem of parents' lacking knowledge of how to get involved rather than a low degree of interest (Nichols, 1991 in Soo-Yin, 2003).

Involvement of parents in their children's home assignments

Learning at home serves various purposes besides enhancing the child's learning experience. It stimulates, supports and enhances learning that has already started at school (Trahan & Lawer-Prince, 1999, in Soo-Yin, 2003). When referring to home work, we may speak of learning through play, of homework assignments and activities closely related to the school curriculum – from learning mathematics to natural and social sciences, as well as languages. Parents help their children in setting their goals for a particular school year or for the future, advise them in their choice of elective subjects and in extra-curricular activities. For all these activities, parents may or may not obtain certain orientations and guidelines from teachers. Epstein (1987 in Soo-Yin, 2003) speaks of two types of activities that parents develop at home. He quotes *common skills or behaviour, and specific skills*. Common skills are those stimulating critical thinking, problem solving skills, development of language skills, development of social and emotional skills, or development of specific behaviour. Specific skills

are those which integrate family and parents to assist a child in examining, completing or complementing the skills he has begun developing with his teacher in the class and during lessons. Most parents help their children on the basis of their past experience in schooling and their acquired knowledge of school subjects. Parents mostly desire to obtain more information on their child's home assignments, the rules on home assignments and approaches which they could use to help their child in the learning process. The question is whether parents have enough knowledge to provide adequate assistance to their child.

According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001 in Jordan et al., 2001), research shows that involvement of parents in assisting their children with homework encompasses several questions, namely questions concerning the content, processes and results of parent involvement. It would be worthwhile to study the motivation of parents to help their children, the dynamics of efficient interaction between parents and the child during assistance with homework, and specific mechanisms of involvement influencing pupil's learning results.

Involvement of parents in homework may influence pupil's achievements through different types of activities, such as imitation, encouragement and direct teaching. Moreover, it may also show a more extensive influence, for instance changing child's attitudes to homework, perception of his or her abilities, and self-control. The issues worth exploring in the future are processes and results of parents' help to a child and study of different activities through which parents encourage and influence efficient home work of pupils.

Training parents to assist their children with their home work

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001 in Jordan et al., 2001) point out that parents get involved in homework because they are persuaded that their co-operation is needed as to bring about certain changes, and that their involvement is expected. In literature it can also be observed that parents want to know more about the teacher's aims concerning homework and how to be more efficient in assisting their child. Some of them (Faires et al., 2000 in Jordan et al., 2001) propose educational programmes for parents in order to use subject-specific strategies of aid with homework that support pupil's progress and learning. The question is, however, how to effectively educate parents to obtain skills for providing such assistance to their child. Training Latin American mothers for reading activities with their child at home proved a particular success in the USA, and resulted in better school performance (Melzi et al., 2000 in Jordan et al., 2001).

Parents may, despite their positive attitude towards assisting their child with homework, be under stress regarding homework, their own limited knowledge of certain subject areas and relevant strategies they should apply in working with their child. It would be interesting to find out how teachers and other school staff can effectively support parent assistance in pupils' homework.

Homework that requires interaction between parents and the child as part of an activity, may be, according to certain authors, a way of supporting the

involvement of parents and increasing pupil's achievements. Homework, particularly that which is planned by teachers to stimulate the interactions between parents and their child, has shown positive results in different subject areas (Epstein et al., 1997 in Jordan et al., 2001; Van Voorhis, 2000 in Jordan et al., 2001). Van Voorhis emphasizes that well-planned tasks requiring interaction may have various positive effects: they may help the child develop learning strategies, prepare lessons, participate in learning situations, develop personal responsibility for homework, as well as stimulate mutual relations between the parents and their child, and develop communication between parents and the teacher. Teachers should consider and systematically plan tasks that require interaction between parents and their child to specifically stimulate involvement of parents and achievements of pupils.

Naturally, the methods, as well as the influence of parent assistance and involvement, vary depending on the child's age. Nevertheless, authors (Walker and Hoover-Dempsey, 2001 in Jordan et al., 2001) point out that it is necessary to maintain tasks that encourage the interaction between parents and children also with older children. The amount and adequacy of aid should be regulated in respect to the child's age. Studies of home assignments in Slovenia (Čagran 1990, Čagran 1993a, Čagran 1993b, Čagran 1993c, Čagran 1997) included research into their effectiveness and investigation of innovations regarding conventional practice in home assignments. Čagran (1993c) specifically points out the effectiveness of unconventional home assignments' practices which more than usual emphasize the teacher's role in planning, transmitting, carrying out and assessing home assignments. The role of parents is presented in the process of carrying out home assignments in terms of their co-operation and »optimal assistance in relation to the child's age and both physiological and psychological characteristics without limiting the child's independence« (Čagran 1993c, p. 251).

The purpose of the research

Within the goal-oriented research project »Vzvodi uspešnega sodelovanja med domom in šolo: sodobne rešitve in perspektive (Lever of successful co-operation between the school and home: modern solutions and perspectives)« (Kalin et al. 2008) we were interested in how teachers and parents evaluate mutual co-operation and which are the key problems of such co-operation. We gave special attention to identifying drivers of change – improvement of co-operation of school and family, teachers and parents. In this paper we will limit our discussion only to a part of findings linked to the following research questions:

1. To what extent are a child's learning achievements, his or her wellbeing among school mates and the teacher-child relationship factors of co-operation between teachers and parents?
2. To what extent can parents help their child in preparing for school and lessons according to teachers' and parents' opinions?

3. What are teachers' and parents' attitudes regarding overburdening parents with their child's school obligations?
4. Are there any statistically significant differences between teachers and parents in answering the above-mentioned questions?
5. Are there statistically significant differences between parents in answering the above-mentioned questions depending on their gender, level of education, number of children in family, the grade attended by their child and their child's learning success?
6. Are there statistically significant differences between teachers in answering the above-mentioned questions depending on their years of teaching experience, the triad they teach or whether and they come from an urban or non-urban school?

Method

We used a descriptive and causal-non-experimental method of pedagogical research. The basic population included all primary schools in Slovenia (N = 448), which were further divided into two strongly distinguished strata, namely urban (N = 237) and non-urban schools (N = 211). Strata were conceived as independent groups within the entire basic group. We then randomly selected 20 urban and 20 non-urban primary schools from the abovementioned strata, thus forming the random sample at the first level. At each school we selected 'a' classes of the 3rd grade, 5th/6th grade and 9th grade and distributed questionnaires to the parents of the pupils. We received 1690 completed questionnaires. All the teachers at all forty schools of the random sample were included in the research. We received 467 completed questionnaires.

Anonymity was ensured to both teachers and parents. Questionnaires for teachers and parents contained multiple choice questions, scales and open-end questions. We made telephone contact with all the schools included in the sample, explained the contextual guidelines of the research and asked for their co-operation. Simultaneously we acquired data of the number of children in 'a' classes of the third, fifth/sixth and ninth grade and the number of teachers at each particular school. We sent questionnaires to schools by post in November 2007, and we received the completed questionnaires towards the end of December 2007 and in the beginning of January 2008. The data was processed with the SPSS statistical package, using descriptive statistical and hi-square test.

Results and interpretation

To what extent pupils' learning achievements, their wellbeing among school mates and the teacher-child relationship depend on co-operation between teachers and children.

Parents enter into co-operation with the teacher for various reasons, and their expectations usually also vary to a large degree. The same is true for teachers. We tried to verify varied expectations by asking teachers and parents which is the most important reason of co-operation, and how they rank three basic reasons: child's learning achievement, child's wellbeing among school mates and the teacher-child relationship. Both parents and teachers ranked these three reasons according to importance using the following scale: 1 – the most important reason for me, 2 – reason of medium importance, and 3 – the least important reason to co-operate for me. Ranking of each of the reasons is presented below.

Let us first have a look at the results of comparison for the whole sample in terms of percentage of parents' and teachers' answers.

	PARENTS						TEACHERS					
	Learning achievement		Wellbeing		Relationship with teachers		Learning achievement		Wellbeing		Relationship with teachers	
	F	f %	f	f %	F	f %	f	f %	f	f %	F	f %
1	384	26.3	408	27.9	668	45.8	101	22.4	190	42.1	160	35.5
2	362	24.8	554	37.9	545	37.4	95	22.1	190	42.1	166	36.8
3	714	48.9	498	34.1	247	16.8	255	56.5	71	15.7	125	27.7
Total	1460	100	1460	100	1460	100	451	100	451	100	451	100

Table 1: Comparison of reasons for co-operation between teachers and parents by their importance.

Legend: 1 – the most important reason for me, 2 – reason of medium importance, 3 – the least important reason to co-operate for me.

Parents' most frequent first ranking answer is the teacher-child relationship (45.8 %). The child's wellbeing among their school mates is the most frequent second ranking answer (37.9 %), however it was closely followed by the teacher-child relationship (37.4 %). The most frequently third ranking answer is the child's learning achievement (48.9 %).

Teachers most often chose the child's wellbeing among school mates as their first ranking answer (42.1 %) – this also appears as the second ranking answer in the same percentage of responses. The most frequently chosen third ranking reason is the learning achievement of the pupil with 56.5 % of answers.

Parents with primary, vocational and secondary education more often cite learning success as the most important reason – parents with primary education gave this answer in 31.4 % of cases, while the share of parents with highest education, ranking learning success in first place, is 22.7 %. The latter most often (53.5 %) rate learning success as the least important reason for co-operation with teachers. Parents with a higher level of education more often mention their child's wellbeing among school mates as the most important reason for co-operation – 41.5 % of parents with a university degree responded this way.

Among all groups of parents, parents with one child most often cited lear-

ning success as the most important reason for co-operating with teachers. The frequency of the answer that the child's wellbeing among school mates is the most important reason for co-operation increases in line with the increase in the number of children in the family in question.

Teachers most often chose child's wellbeing among school mates as the most important reason (42.1 %). Child's relationship with teacher is a less important reason for teachers, while parents mention it as the most important. It is noteworthy that out of all three reasons, learning success is the least important for both teachers and parents.

Parents' assisting their children in preparing for school and lessons

We were interested in teachers' and parents' views on the question to what extent parents can help their child prepare for school and lessons, and to what extent teachers and parents believe that parents are overburdened with their child's school obligations. Involvement of parents in helping the child with homework poses various questions: from the parents' motivation in helping their child, to strategies parents use to help their child. A special question thus opens concerning qualification of parents to give such help and concerning the necessity to educate parents as to how to help their child in a more suitable way.

We established that parents and teachers show statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 2.446E2$; $g = 2$, $\alpha = 0.000$) in their answers on how parents can help their child prepare for school and lessons.

65.8 % of the parents in the sample estimate that they know how to help their child in almost all subjects if necessary. Teachers chose this answer in 27.3 % of cases. Most teachers (71.2 %) estimate that parents know how to help their child in only some subjects; this answer appears in parents in 30.8 % of cases. 3.4 % of parents and 1.5 % of teachers say that they do not know how to help in any subject.

Parents are therefore more confident of their own abilities to help, while teachers recorded the answer that parents can help to a lesser degree.

		Do you view that you can help your child prepare for school and lessons?			
		I can help with all subjects	I can help with some subjects	Almost with none of the subjects	Total
Parents	f	1084	507	56	1647
	f %	65.8	30.8	3.4	100.0
Teachers	f	125	326	7	458
	f %	27.3	71.2	1.5	100.0
Total	f	1209	833	63	2105
	f %	57.4	39.6	3.0	100.0

Table 2: Teachers' and parents' attitudes on how parents can help their child prepare for school and lessons.

In relation to achieved education we established statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 2.154E2$; $g = 4$, $\alpha = 0.000$) in the responses to the question how parents can help their child in preparations for school and lessons.

As many as 88.8 % of parents with the highest education answered that they can help their child in all subjects, while this percentage decreases in line with the level of achieved education and reaches 43.2 % in parents with only primary and vocational education. These parents answered in the highest degree (49.1 %) that they can help their child with some subjects. 10.7 % of the highest educated parents chose this answer, although we expected this share to be smaller. Parents with the lowest education stated that they cannot help their child with any of the subjects in the highest share (7.7 %).

			Do you view that you can help your child prepare for school and lessons?			
			I can help with all subjects	I can help with some subjects	Almost with none of the subjects	Total
Education:	PS + VS	f	202	230	36	468
		f %	43.2	49.1	7.7	100.0
	SS	f	493	218	17	728
		f %	67.7	29.9	2.3	100.0
	Coll.+Univ. and above	f	372	45	2	419
		f %	88.8	10.7	0.5	100.0
	Total	f	1067	493	55	1615
		f %	66.1	30.5	3.4	100.0

Table 3: Teachers' and parents' views on how parents can help their child prepare for school and lessons.

Legend: PS = Primary school; VS = Vocational school; SS = Secondary school; Coll. = College; Univ. = University

We established statistically significant differences in relation to the number of children in the family ($\chi^2 = 46.273$; $g = 6$, $\alpha = 0.000$) regarding the question on helping their child prepare for school and lessons. The share of parents' answers that they can help their child in all subjects decreases with the number of children in the family – this is stated by 74.2 % of parents with one child and 55.6 % of parents with four or more children. The share of answers that they can help with some subjects increases from 24.2 % in parents with one child to 30.6 % in parents with four and more children.

Parents' answers differ in a statistically significant degree in relation to the child's learning achievements ($\chi^2 = 2.2828E2$; $g = 4$, $\alpha = 0.000$). Parents of children for whom descriptive assessment is used, can help their child with all subjects in 90.6 % of cases; the lowest share (33.8 %) of these answers is among parents of children with good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory learning achievements. These parents contribute the highest share of answers that they

can help with some subjects (58.1 %), while 8.1 % cannot help in almost any of the subjects. 60.7 % of parents of children with excellent and very good learning achievements answer that they can help with all subjects, while 35.4 % can help with some subjects. Parents of children with less satisfactory learning achievements can help their children to learn only some subjects. Therefore we could raise questions whether parents need help or training to adequately support their child's learning, as well as how this help could be carried out and by whom.

			Do you view that you can help your child prepare for school and lessons?			
			I can help with all subjects	I can help with some subjects	Almost with none of the subjects	Total
Learning achievement	Descriptive assessment	f	483	49	1	533
		f %	90.6	9.2	0.2	100.0
	Excellent and very good	f	502	293	32	827
		f %	60.7	35.4	3.9	100.0
	Good + satisfactory + unsatisfactory	f	92	158	22	272
		f %	33.8	58.1	8.1	100.0
	Total	f	1077	500	55	1632
		f %	66.0	30.6	3.4	100.0

Table 4: Teachers' and parents' attitudes about how parents can help their child prepare for school and lessons

In relation to the class attended, there are statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 3.132E2$; $g = 4$, $\alpha = 0.000$) in parents' answers to the question whether they can help their child prepare for school and lessons. As the child's grade increases, the percentage of parents who can help the child with all subjects decreases – from 89.6 % in the third grade to 40.8 % in the ninth grade. The percentage of parents saying that they can help in some subjects similarly increases (from 10.2 % in the third grade to 50.1 % in the ninth grade), as does the percentage of parents who cannot help their child at all any more (in the ninth grade there are 9.1 % of such parents and 0.2 % in the third grade).

We also researched the *teachers' opinion* whether parents can help in preparation for school and lessons at home. We established statistically significant differences in relation to the triad in which teachers teach ($\chi^2 = 86.047$; $g = 4$, $\alpha = 0.000$).

Teachers' opinions are similar to those of parents. As the teacher's number of years of working in schooling increases, teachers view that parents are less and less able to help their child – from 50.6 % of teachers who estimate that parents can help with all subjects in the first triad, to only 6.6 % of parents, who, according to teachers, can help in the 9th grade. According to teachers, 89.2 % of

			Do you view that you can help your child prepare for school and lessons?			
			I can help with all subjects	I can help with some subjects	Almost with none of the subjects	Total
Grade	Third	f	510	58	1	569
		f%	89.6	10.2	0.2	100.0
	fifth and sixth	f	359	184	8	551
		f%	65.2	33.4	1.5	100.0
	Ninth	f	212	260	47	519
		f%	40.8	50.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	f	1081	502	56	1639
		f%	66.0	30.6	3.4	100.0

Table 5: Parents' views on how they can help their child prepare for school and lessons in relation to the grade attended

parents can only partly help their children in the 9th grade, while they estimate the share of such parents to amount to 49.4 % in the first triad.

			Do you view that parents can help their child prepare for school and lessons?			
			They can help with all lessons	They can partly help	They can help with almost none of the subjects	Total
Triad	First triad	F	80	78	0	158
		f%	50.6	49.4	0.0	100.0
	Second triad	f	33	84	0	117
		f%	28.2	71.8	0.0	100.0
	Third triad	f	11	149	7	167
		f%	6.6	89.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	f	124	311	7	442
		f%	28.1	70.4	1.6	100.0

Table 6: Teachers' views on how parents can help their child prepare for school and lessons in relation to the triad they teach

Teachers' and parents' attitudes regarding overburdening of parents with school obligations of their child

We were interested in teachers' and parents' attitudes regarding overburdening of parents with school obligations of their child. It is a known fact that school to a great extent determines the dynamics and characteristics of family life.

We established a statistically significant difference between teachers and parents ($\chi^2 = 56.313$; $g = 4$, $\alpha = 0.000$) regarding the statement that parents are overburdened with school obligations of their child.

		Parents are overburdened with school obligations of their child.					
		I absolutely disagree	I don't agree	I partially agree	I agree	I absolutely agree	Total
Parents	f	74	399	597	345	195	1610
	f %	4.6	24.8	37.1	21.4	12.1	100.0
Teachers	f	12	149	215	60	18	454
	f %	2.6	32.8	47.4	13.2	4.0	100.0
Total	f	86	548	812	405	213	2064
	f %	4.2	26.6	39.3	19.6	10.3	100.0

Table 7: Teachers' and parents' attitudes regarding overburdening of parents with school obligations of their child.

In fact, parents and teachers most often declared that they partially agreed with the statement. The share of such answers is somewhat greater in teachers (47.4 %), compared to parents (37.1 %). Significantly more teachers than parents disagree with the statement; this applies to 32.8 % of teachers and 24.8 % of parents. The share of parents who agree or absolutely agree with the statement exceeds the teachers' share. Teachers less often believe parents are overburdened with their child's school obligations. As much as a third of parents agree with the statement that they feel overburdened with their child's school obligations.

			Parents are overburdened with school obligations of their children.					
			I absolutely disagree	I don't agree	I partially agree	I agree	I absolutely agree	Total
Education:	PS +VS	f	27	117	163	96	47	450
		f%	6.0	26.0	36.2	21.3	10.4	100.0
	SS	f	30	149	276	164	99	718
		f%	4.2	20.8	38.4	22.8	13.8	100.0
	Coll.+Univ. and above	f	15	129	147	77	45	413
		f	3.6	31.2	35.6	18.6	10.9	100.0
	Total	f	72	395	586	337	191	1581
		f%	4.6	25.0	37.1	21.3	12.1	100.0

Table 8: Parents' views regarding being overburdened with school obligations of their child depending on their level of education

Parents' answers to this question show statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 20.922$; $g = 8$, $\alpha = 0.007$) also in view of their achieved education. Partial agreement is the most frequent answer in all groups of parents. 6 % of parents with primary and vocational education say that they do not agree at all, while the same answer is recorded in 4.2 % of parents with the highest education. The latter hold the biggest share of the answer that they do not agree (31.2 %). The answer »I absolutely agree« is most often given by parents with secondary education (13.8 %).

Statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 34.735$; $g = 12$, $\alpha = 0.001$) appeared in parents' responses also in relation to the number of children in the family. The overwhelming majority of parents partially agreed. The answer »I absolutely disagree« was mostly (8.7 %) given by parents with four or more children, in frequency (5.4 %) they are followed by parents with one child. Most parents with one child maintain that they don't agree, while parents with two children say that they absolutely agree (14.1 %); in this they are followed by parents with four or more children (12.6 %). It seems that parents with two children experience overburdening in the highest degree.

Parents' answers also show statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 24.654$; $g = 8$, $\alpha = 0.002$) in relation to the class attended by their child. Everywhere the most frequent answer was partial agreement – from 41.7 % to 50.8 %. Among parents of children in the 5th and 6th grade, 6.1 % do not agree at all with the statement, while in other two grades the share of such parents is 3.8 % and 3.9 %. Parents of children in the 9th grade most often partially agreed with the statement – in 40.1 %. Agreement is most often expressed by parents of children in the 5th and 6th grade (25.4 %), while absolute agreement is in the highest share expressed by parents of children in the 3rd grade – 13.7 %.

			Parents are overburdened with school obligations of their children.					
			I absolutely disagree	I don't agree	I partially agree	I agree	I absolutely agree	Total
Grade	Third	f	22	141	201	121	77	562
		f%	3.9	25.1	35.8	21.5	13.7	100.0
	fifth and sixth	f	33	111	191	137	67	539
		f%	6.1	20.6	35.4	25.4	12.4	100.0
	Ninth	f	19	146	202	86	51	504
		f%	3.8	29.0	40.1	17.1	10.1	100.0
	Total	f	74	398	594	344	195	1605
		f%	4.6	24.8	37.0	21.4	12.1	100.0

Table 9: Parents' attitudes regarding overburdening with school obligations of their child in relation to the grade attended by the child

In the sample of teachers there are statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 32.758$; $g = 8$, $\alpha = 0.000$) in their agreement with the statement in relation to the triad where they teach. 46.2 % of teachers in the first triad do not agree that parents are overburdened with school obligations; while partial agreement is expressed by 41.7 % of teachers. It is characteristic of the second triad that 50.8 % of teachers partly agree with the statement, while 21.2 % do not agree. Most teachers from the second triad absolutely agree (7.6 %) that parents are overburdened. Third triad teachers also partly agree with the statement (50.3 %), while total agreement was expressed by 17 % of them – this is the largest share when compared to teachers of the other two triads.

			Parents are overburdened with school obligations of their children.					
			I absolutely disagree	I don't agree	I partially agree	I agree	I absolutely agree	Total
Triad	First	f	4	72	65	11	4	156
		f %	2.6	46.2	41.7	7.1	2.6	100.0
	Second	f	6	25	60	18	9	118
		f %	5.1	21.2	50.8	15.3	7.6	100.0
	Third	f	1	48	83	28	5	165
		f %	0.6	29.1	50.3	17.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	f	11	145	208	57	18	439
		f %	2.5	33.0	47.4	13.0	4.1	100.0

Table 10: Teachers' attitudes regarding overburdening of parents with school obligations of their child, in relation to the triad they teach

A statistically significant difference was also recorded among teachers ($\chi^2 = 31.751$; $g = 12$, $\alpha = 0.002$) in relation to years of teaching when evaluating the statement that parents are overburdened with school obligations of their child. Teachers with most years of teaching to the greatest extent disagree with the statement that parents are overburdened – their share is 8.1 %. In this group, 52.2 % of teachers express partial agreement. Teachers with the shortest time of teaching agreed similarly– 52.9 % of them partly agree that parents are overburdened.

Conclusions

We found that parents most often cite the teacher-child relationship as the reason for their co-operation with teachers (45.8 %), while teachers cite the child's wellbeing among school mates as the most important reason for co-operating with parents (42.1 %). Parents with primary, vocational and secondary education more often mention learning success as the most important reason, while

for parents with higher education the child's wellbeing among school mates is of most importance. Our research pointed out that learning success is a more important reason for parents with one child. The child's relationship with the teacher is a less important reason for teachers, while for parents it figures in the first place. It is noteworthy that among all three reasons (child's learning success, teacher-child relationship, child's wellbeing among school mates), learning success is the least important for both teachers and parents, even though some differences between teachers and parents appear, which certainly influences the readiness of parents to get involved in and to co-operate with the school and teachers, while on the other hand it influences teachers and their organizing of those forms and methods of co-operation where parents will be able to get involved according to their basic expectations about co-operation with teachers.

In general, parents and teachers partly agreed that parents were overburdened with school obligations of their children. Parents expressed a higher degree of agreement than teachers. It may be interesting to note that it is the parents with two children who feel the heaviest burden and not those who have four or more children. We can conclude that the difference between how teachers and parents experience overburdening with the child's school obligations arises due to different understanding of the parents' role in their child's learning. We can see two different interpretations. On the one hand parents may take too much responsibility for their child's school obligations, they may even do the homework instead of the child and experience that school to a large extent determines their family life. On the other hand teachers may fail to notice such parents' distress and not discuss the subject with them sufficiently, or fail to explain to the parents where they see their role in a child's school obligations, or they plan school obligations insufficiently without taking into account the parents' role in assisting their child. All these interpretations are merely indirect and subjective. Further suitable research in this area is needed to achieve a more objective view.

65.8 % of parents in the sample estimate that they *know how to help their child* with almost all subjects if help is needed. Most teachers (71.2 %) estimate that parents know how to help child only with some subjects. Parents are therefore slightly more convinced in their own abilities to help, while with teachers the answer that parents can only partly help prevails. Our finding is that the share of parents answering that they can help their child with all subjects decreases with the level of achieved formal education of parents. 10.7 % of parents with the highest achieved education answer that they can help their child only in some subjects, while this answer was given by 49.1 % of parents with primary and vocational education. Parents of children with less satisfactory learning achievements can help their children only in some subjects. This opens questions about possible parents' needs for appropriate training to help their children, especially at the beginning of schooling when their role has more significance than later, when it is important that children themselves assume more responsibility for their learning and learning success. This also gives rise to the question about the nature of parental assistance to the child in preparation for school and lessons. Answers indicate that teachers to a lesser degree plan

homework which would require parents' involvement, or they do not give home assignments to systematically encourage interaction between parents and children. Communication about school work, along with particular home assignments where the child has to co-operate with parents, can be an encouragement for the child to learn, and it also raises the child's motivation for learning, helps to internalize the value of education, etc. (Gonzalez-DeHass et al. 2005). In this respect, teachers would probably need more systematic training also in the area of giving home assignments and other forms of encouraging communication between parents and children through school work.

On the other hand, as mentioned in the theoretical introduction, it is especially important for parents to be aware of their responsibility to create family environment, supportive of learning, where they express suitably high (but not unreal) expectation about child's learning achievements and future career and that they get appropriately included in their child's education in school and community (Henderson and Berla 1994).

The problem may lie in the fact that parents see themselves more as directly helping their child in learning and preparing for the lessons than primarily supporting their child's learning and encouraging learning, where the level of formally achieved education of parents and the acquired knowledge for specific help in preparations for lessons and work with home assignments have considerably smaller value than the awareness of the value of education and appropriate encouraging (supporting) of a child's learning and development.

The research undoubtedly opens new questions about possibilities and power of co-operation between teachers and parents, and about drivers necessary for appropriate involvement of parents to bring about specific results in the area of the child's learning achievement. Research carried out abroad (Henderson and Berla 1994; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2001 in Jordan et al. 2001; Gonzalez-DeHass et al. 2005; Pomerantz et al. 2007) indicates that active involvement of parents significantly influenced learning achievement of pupils. In our environment we would need systematic research of this area and with it appropriate training of teachers for planning, introduction and evaluation of those types of involvement and co-operation with parents that will, in the highest possible degree, ensure optimum development of each individual and learning achievements in line with each individual's capabilities.

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Dr Barbara Šteh

How teachers and parents see each other in their mutual »co-operation«

Abstract: In this paper, various models of teacher-parent relationships are presented: ranging from those that are playing down the involvement and active role of parents to those emphasizing it. The prevailing approach to establishing teacher-parent relationships in a particular school depends also on the dominating teaching culture of the school in question and on the prevailing educational beliefs and attitudes of the teachers. Additionally, the quality of co-operation depends on teachers' knowledge and skills, as well as on parents' experience, expectations and attitudes. In this paper we focus on parents' views of teachers and teachers' views of parents. Only when they see each other as competent persons can they accept each other as partners in mutual educational and problem-solving activities. The results acquired through polling a representative sample of teachers and parents show that this is not always the case, as only half of the parents view teachers as education experts, while the vast majority of teachers only partly agree with the statement that »parents today know how to be parents«.

Key words: beliefs and orientations, attitudes, the role of teachers, the role of parents, models of mutual co-operation, partner relationship, teaching culture

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Introduction

Good mutual co-operation between teachers and parents significantly contributes to providing children with an optimal education. This statement is supported by numerous research projects (Hornby 2000, Olsen and Fuller 2003, Pomerantz et al. 2007). Its effects are manifested not only at the level of pupils and their learning achievements, but also at the level of teachers and parents, for example as increased satisfaction with their work, in better family relations, etc. The nature and scope of these effects obviously depends on the level and quality of mutual co-operation. From the view point of individual schools, as well as the teachers themselves, the immediate questions are: to what extent do they succeed in actively involving as many parents as possible, what foundations for mutual co-operation have they set and how good their relations with parents are.

To guarantee quality co-operation between the school and home it is important for each particular school to form a common vision on this co-operation. Established forms of co-operation are not enough; teachers and school head staff have to embrace quality co-operation with parents as one of their major goals, since it is only through such co-operation that new and more efficient forms of such co-operation can be developed. In a certain sense, the next precondition is that teachers co-operate between themselves, as it is hard to believe that teachers, who enclose themselves within the »walls« of their subject domain, will be open towards parents as their partners. Links between subjects and team co-operation is a weak point of many teachers as is evident from recent research projects concerning teachers' competence performed in the past few years (Razdevšek Pučko 2004; Peklaj, Puklek Levpušček 2006). Typical models of mutual relationships and groupings form a characteristic teaching culture, which significantly influences the teachers' entire activities and their professional development (Hargreaves, 1992). According to Hargreaves (1992) one of the following four forms of teaching culture can be established in a particular school:

1. *Individualized teaching culture* (individualism) is found at those schools where teachers work independently and are isolated from each other;

2. *Balkanized teaching culture* (balkanization)¹ is found when teachers belong to various groups and subgroups (for example class teachers, teachers of a particular subject, teachers of children with special needs, etc.) which are separate from or even oppose each other. In such a mode, teachers express their belonging only to specific groups while being indifferent or even intolerant to or competing with other groups;
3. *Participational teaching culture* (co-operation) is found at schools where teachers work together, share ideas, teaching and work aids, where they are interrelated and considered as members of the same working community. The existence of such a model is based on teachers' daily work where they support each other, but at the same time do not fear to express their disagreement. Furthermore, warm interpersonal relationships are characteristic of this model. However, such an atmosphere is hard to achieve and even harder to maintain;
4. *Challenged (planned) co-operation*, which does not appear spontaneously, rather it is introduced as an administrative measure to improve participational culture among teachers: exchange of experience, common learning, mutual support in professional and personal growth, etc. This type of co-operation is particularly suitable in the initial period of systematic development of teacher co-operation, where it is important to focus on providing opportunities for common work and learning, since the excessive administrative burden and control may even lead to opposite effects and teachers' resistance.

Hargreaves (1992) arrived at the above-mentioned forms of teaching cultures by comparing several research studies and through numerous discussions with teachers on both sides of the Atlantic. It is necessary to bear in mind that the formation of school culture is a dynamic process and it may be called into question whether such »pure« forms exist in reality. By all means, the above-mentioned classification can serve as a good model for analysing the existing culture at a particular school and for further planning of efficient co-operation between school professional staff. We actually have to bear in mind that through a typical form of teaching culture the contents of the teaching culture, such as its norms, values, beliefs and characteristic ways of acting are reproduced and transformed. Hargreaves (1992, p. 232) maintains that this is why understanding major forms of teaching culture helps to better understand the dynamics of educational changes or their absence, »why teachers do or do not persist in using 'traditional' teaching styles, why teachers support or resist innovation, and so on«.

In reality, the prevailing school atmosphere contributes to a great extent to which model of forming relations with parents the majority of teachers in a par-

¹ The author's designation has been used. The expression initially described the disintegration and fragmentation of the Ottoman empire, while today in English-speaking countries it is also used to describe other types of disintegration, such as the disintegration of a group into smaller groups, which may compete and even be hostile towards each other; the expression is no longer bound to its original geographical area (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). It is in this sense that the term 'balkanization' was used by the author and is used in this paper in the same sense.

ticular school are inclined to. Namely Sahlberg (1998) sees teachers' beliefs and their formed mental educational models² as core elements of each organization, while being aware that changing these structures is one of the most difficult tasks. He sees the solution in communication and co-operation. It is essential to ensure inflow and flow of quality information, available to all participants in the education process. It is therefore necessary to reorganize the school structure as to provide more opportunities and time for various participational forms, to achieve school openness and to develop an information system. In such circumstances teachers have the opportunity to reflect upon their beliefs, to get insight into school activity in terms of its system and their position in it, to share experience and change their own behaviour, to receive support from colleagues and to form a common vision.

After all, the quality of co-operation among teachers, as well as their co-operation with pupils and parents always depends on individual teachers' beliefs, knowledge and skills.

Orientation of teachers and the role which they are willing to assume towards parents

Appropriate teachers' attitudes and their readiness to co-operate with parents are of key importance if the co-operation is to succeed. Hornby (2000) points out two *key teachers' orientations* which are necessary for the development of *partnership* with parents:

For the teachers to be able to develop a partnership with parents it is of key importance to have *genuine, respectful and empathetic* interpersonal communication with them.

Only teachers with a certain amount of self-confidence manage to be genuine, since this enables them to be frank and capable of admitting their mistakes instead of unnecessarily hiding behind their wall of competence. Respectfulness means, among other things, that teachers always listen to and heed parents' opinions, since it is the parents who are responsible for their child's development in the long run and they know the child from perspectives which may be unknown and hidden to the teachers. Yet it is most important for teachers to develop their own empathic skills, to try and see the child's situation from the parents' perspective, as this will most probably lead to an effective teacher-parent partnership.

1. The second necessary teacher's attitude refers to the pupil – the teacher is expected to assume a hoping yet realistic attitude regarding possible progress and the pupil's prognosis.

Parents need teachers who are optimistic, but still realistic about the de-

² Mental models of education represent a system of notions concerning teaching and learning, the learning process, teacher and pupil roles, division of tasks and responsibilities, education in general, etc. (see also Vermunt 1993).

velopment of their child, and do not avoid an open and sincere conversation. They only need to conduct such conversation with a certain degree of sensibility. They should also challenge their own opinions of certain cases »as hopeless«, as in every situation it is possible to achieve certain progress, even if all of the problems are not solved or all goals are not reached.

Teachers may assume very diverse attitudes towards parents, ranging from seeing them as a problem, as competitors, as too vulnerable and needing help, through the belief that a professional distance has to be kept towards parents, and finally to the opinion that they can provide a valued support in educating their children and act as good collaborators. The key factor for fruitful co-operation is whether the teacher can engage in dialogue with parents on an equal basis and see them as partners in mutual educational activities and problem solving. Or, on the other hand, the teacher may place them in an inferior position, where parents mainly have to be taught, or in a superior role where teachers feel they need to apologize and justify their actions. In establishing and maintaining equal roles or a partnership between teachers and parents, it is worth keeping in mind that both teachers and parents are experts, namely teachers for education and parents for their children. It is only possible to creatively co-operate if their powers and competence are recognized and taken into account (O'Callaghan 1993 quoted in Čačinovič-Vogrinčič 1999). We often underestimate the importance of information which parents can reveal to us about their children, while on the other hand we as teachers can disclose parents how their child performs in school environment not only at the cognitive but also at the emotional and social level. In addition, teachers should be competent in creating an optimal and encouraging learning environment which eases and encourages the learning process. Views of both groups can of course be subjective due to the position from which they enter a relationship. Parents are, as can be expected, usually »advocates« for their own children (Henry 1996 in Čačinovič-Vogrinčič 1999), they are emotionally bound to them and have difficulty in accepting certain »truths« about their child. Neither are teachers as independent in their own views as it would seem at the first sight, as they are a part of the system which poses its own demands and value criteria which can also limit the teacher's perspectives (for example their image of a »good, obedient pupil«). If parents and teachers manage to trust and be frank to each other, they both see pupils, each other and their problems in a more realistic perspective, which contributes to their more efficient co-operation.

Two extremes of parent-teacher relationships are pointed out above: on the one hand there is a relationship with the necessary submission of one party – usually parents, and sometimes also teachers, and on the other hand a partnership. *Approaches to establishing relationships between teachers and parents* can be differentiated and classified from those which downplay the involvement and active role of parents to those which emphasize it. Hornby (2000) lists the following models of establishing teacher-parent relationships, defined by varied sets of assumptions, goals and strategies:

1. In the *protective model* (Swap 1993, quoted in Hornby 2000) it is important to avoid conflicts between teachers and parents. This is best achieved

through total separation of teaching and parenting. Education is the school's and teachers' task, and parent involvement can be perceived as a disturbing interference. It is the parents' task to ensure children come to school regularly with all necessary school accessories. Swap (1993 quoted in Hornby 2000) considers this to be the most common model of teacher-parent relationship.

2. In the *expert model* (Cunningham, Davis 1985, quoted in Hornby 2000) teachers consider themselves as experts in all aspects of development and education of children. The role of parents is to accept information and instructions regarding their children and they are pushed into a completely submissive role and dependence. Parents are not supposed to question teacher's decisions and thus lose confidence in their own competence, while at the same time teachers with such an attitude are not admitted to the rich source of information which parents have of their children and often overlook important problems or abilities of pupils. They also do not have any insight into the child's family life which can significantly influence their learning. Parents are usually very dissatisfied with the attitude of such teachers.
3. In the *transmission model* (Swap 1993, quoted in Hornby 2000) teachers still consider themselves as the major source of expertise, but they accept that parents can play an important role in enhancing their child's progress. They present particular measures to parents and expect them to carry them out. In this way they may even overburden some parents.
4. In the *curricular enrichment model* (Swap 1993, quoted in Hornby 2000) parents' contribution can enrich the curriculum and thus significantly enhance a school's educational goals. Lately, the focus has been placed on multicultural education, where parents of various ethnical, religious and cultural groups assist in presenting the history, values, cultures and customs of the group from which they originate. But parents' contribution is not restricted to the area of multiculturalism. It is a good opportunity for teachers and parents to learn from each other. The problem is that parents thus enter the area of teaching and many teachers find this threatening.
5. In the *consumer model* (Cunningham, Davis 1985, quoted in Hornby 2000), parents have control over decisions. The teachers' role is to present all relevant information and available possibilities to parents and help them choose the optimal course of action. This eliminates the fear that parents are pushed into a dependent role, but the fact that teachers lose their professional responsibility is problematic in the same way as the opposite situation where teachers are seen as experts on all aspects of a child's development.
6. The most suitable model of teacher-parent co-operation is the *partnership model*, as it includes sharing of expertise and control with the view of ensuring optimal education for children, to which both teachers and parents contribute. Naturally it is not possible to establish such partnership if there is no mutual respect between teachers and parents. Teachers and parents

should listen to and take each other's opinions into account. A partnership occurs when there is mutual planning and sharing of responsibilities as well as a certain long-lasting involvement and carrying out of particular activities. Hornby (2000) points out 4 key elements of such partnership:

- Two-way communication,
- Mutual support,
- Common decision-making,
- Encouraging learning.

The *partnership model* is perceived as the most suitable model for developing constructive parent involvement, as teachers also take parents' needs into account and are aware of various manners in which parents can contribute to the development and education of their children. However, this does not mean that this model is the most suitable for all situations. It is important to be flexible and to adapt the approach to parents' characteristics. In a particular moment some parents will welcome a detailed presentation of home reading scheme as an aid to help the child in acquiring specific reading skills, while in other cases parents will make the best choice of a theme to be dealt with in »the school for parents«.

Hornby (2000) points out that everywhere in the world parents have more or less the same expectations towards teachers and teachers towards parents, but this has to be clarified again and again at the beginning of the co-operation, as both groups are usually genuinely surprised at the other's expectations. Many complementary features can be found among them, but there are also differences. Let me name some typical parents' expectations. They expect teachers to:

- Consult them to a greater extent and to listen to their views,
- Be more open to opinions and standpoints of others,
- Be willing to admit that there are things they do not know,
- Get in contact with parents if they suspect their child has a problem,
- Treat all children with respect,
- Take into account individual differences among pupils,
- Identify children's learning problems and to try to help them,
- Discuss pupil's progress with other teachers and parents,
- Regularly correct assignments given to pupils.
- ...

Apart from this we have to constantly bear in mind that parents are a very heterogeneous group of individuals and that we can address all parents and approach everybody's needs with some actions and ways of co-operation, while fewer parents may be approached with certain other actions, and only a handful of parents with other ways of co-operation. Parents' contribution will also differ. All or a vast majority will probably be happy to attend a performance where their child participates. Some will embrace the possibility to communicate via e-mail, while others do not use e-mail and will be most satisfied if teachers are able to propose a date for the parent-teacher meeting which suits them, while the attention of the third group of parents will be gained only by numerous

messages sent to their home and which should never contain only negative information. Some parents may never respond, due to various reasons. The more varied forms of co-operation and involvement we offer parents, the greater the chance to attract them in a greater number. It is important to keep in mind that teachers are susceptible to both objective and subjective obstacles which can prevent parents from getting more actively involved, and endeavour to remove them.

Necessary knowledge and skills of teachers

It is obvious that the more teachers try to intensify parents' involvement and establish a partnership, the more knowledge and skills of interpersonal co-operation they will require. Hornby (2000) stresses the importance of understanding the parents' view that teachers have to be aware of family dynamics and see the child in the family context, and should know how to help parents and pupils tackle various problems (how to handle specific pupils' deficiencies, how to help when their parents are getting divorced or when they come from a particular ethnical group, when parents are extraordinarily »difficult«, etc.). To be able to use this knowledge properly, teachers have to have certain *participational, communicational and organisational skills*³. Hornby (2000) points out the following:

- Mastering basic listening and counselling skills,
- Assertive communication skills,
- Organisational and communicational skills for maintaining contacts with parents (meetings, electronic messages, telephone calls, etc.),
- Skills for involving parents in educational programmes of their children (in organizing learning, in adjusting learning, encouraging motivation, building self-respect, etc.),
- Leadership skills, so that various parent group meetings can be organized.

To be effective in fulfilling their tasks teachers have to have well developed basic interpersonal or communicational skills; it could even be said that they need to master basic counselling skills (Kottler and Kottler 2001). They need these skills when they interact with pupils, colleagues and school head staff and, of course, parents. If we bear in mind the educational process and class work, it is obvious that teachers need to know how to convey information well, how to pose good questions, how to listen, adjust class dynamics, maintain discipline and solve problems. Mastering listening skills, assertiveness and counselling is especially important when working with so-called difficult parents (Hornby 2000, Kottler and Kottler 2001): with parents who give no support to

³ You can read more about these skills, especially the skills of listening, assertiveness and counselling in »Izzivi in smernice kakovostnega sodelovanja med šolo in starši« (Kalin et al., soon to be published).

the teacher and his/her endeavours, who are not prepared to co-operate, who constantly complain, are hostile and threatening, who abuse their child, who have personal, partnership and family problems, who are vulnerable, who expect too much or too little from their children and those who come from a different social, cultural or ethnical environment.

We have to be aware that parents, too, come to school with set attitudes, orientations and expectations. Readiness of both groups to develop quality co-operation is essential. Teachers will much more easily adjust the process of mutual co-operation and nimbly look for new paths for more effective co-operation with all or at least most parents, if they also master basic co-operative, communicational and organizational skills. For the success of their work with children and parents they essentially need willingness to understand, help (Kottler and Kottler 2001) and trust that pupils and parents can find their own powers or can develop competence in solving their own problems (O'Callaghan 1993, Saleebey 1997 quoted in Čačinovič-Vogrinič 1999). Teachers are not all-powerful and pupils and parents should take their own share of responsibility for effective learning and mutual co-operation.

The purpose of the research

In the empirical research conducted as part of the project entitled »Vzvodi uspešnega sodelovanja med šolo in domom: sodobne rešitve in perspektive« – »Lever of successful co-operation between the school and the home: modern solutions and perspectives«, (Kalin et al. 2008), our main objective was to establish the goal of home-school co-operation from the teachers' and parents' perspectives, the expectations and experience of both groups, the original attitude towards co-operation and the limitations and possibilities for improvement. In this paper I primarily pose the question what are teachers like in parents' eyes and parents in teachers' eyes and then present findings related to the following research questions:

1. What do teachers themselves think of the view parents have of them?
2. How do parents view teachers – do they see them as experts for education or not? Who would parents believe if a problem occurred between their child and the teacher?
3. To what extent do teachers and parents agree that today parents know how to be parents, and that they need additional education in parenting and family education problems?
4. What is the role of teachers and parents in mutual consultations from the point of view of both groups?
5. To what extent do teachers and parents agree that teachers have to give concrete advice when a child faces problems and have to be ready to look for solutions together?
6. Do parents' and teachers' answers to the above-mentioned questions differ?
7. Do teachers' perceptions differ in relation to years of teaching, type of school and the triad which they teach?

8. Do parents' perceptions differ in relation to their achieved education, the level of the child's learning achievements, the triad or the type of school their child attends as well as their own school experience?

Method

We used a descriptive and causal-non-experimental method in the research. The basic population includes all primary schools in Slovenia (N = 448), which were further divided into two strongly expressed strata, namely urban (N = 237) and non-urban schools (N = 211). We randomly selected 20 urban and 20 non-urban primary schools from the abovementioned strata. We sent questionnaires on co-operation between school and home to all teachers of these schools. We also asked these schools to distribute a copy of the questionnaire to parents of 3rd, 6th and 9th grade pupils. Anonymity was guaranteed to both teachers and parents. By the end of 2007 we received 467 completed questionnaires from teachers and 1690 from parents. The questionnaires for both parents and teachers included, at the beginning, questions concerning respondents' basic data, while most of the following questions generally collected opinions and evaluations of mutual co-operation, their advantages and obstacles, etc. The questionnaire contents were identical in the most cases which enabled us to compare the answers. While multiple choice questions prevailed, there were 6 open-ended questions, and to assess the degree of agreement with particular statements the Likert-type scale of attitudes was used. In this paper only findings related to the above-mentioned research questions will be presented. The data was processed using the SPSS statistical package for Windows. The following statistical procedures were used: descriptive analysis of variables, χ^2 test or Kullback test⁴, when more than 20 % of theoretical frequencies were less than 5.

Results and interpretation

To establish trust and build positive teacher-parent relationships it is important that, among other things, both groups see each other as competent persons: parents should see teachers as education experts, while teachers should see parents as experts for the development and education of their own child. Only in this manner can both groups accept each other as partners in common educational activities and problem solving.

Do parents see teachers as experts?

We were interested to see what teachers themselves think of the view parents have of them. Do they, in their own opinion, figure in parents' view as

⁴ This calculation has been made using a designated application.

experts, having a good command of their professional work or the opposite – are they seen as not being sufficiently qualified for their professional work?

What do you think is parents' view of yourself?		
	F	f%
You are experts who know how to provide knowledge and to educate	362	81.2
You know how to present knowledge, but not how to educate	37	8.3
Other	47	10.5
Total	446	100.0

Table 1: Teachers' opinions on how parents see them

The majority of teachers who responded (81.2 %) thought that parents see them as experts who know how to provide knowledge and to educate, while only 8.3% of teachers think that parents see them as people who know how to provide knowledge, but not how to educate. There is a high share of respondents who answered »Other« (10.5%), where teachers stated answers such »I don't know« and »I can't decide« etc.

In addition, we looked into the question whether teachers' perceptions of parents' opinions of them differ in relation to years of teaching, type of school and the triad which they teach. Only differences related to the triad proved to be statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 15.76$; $df = 4$, $p = 0.003$, $n = 433$). The largest difference occurs in answers of teachers in the first two triads and the third triad as some teachers of the third triad are more critical. Three quarters of them still think that parents see them as experts who know how to provide knowledge and educate, but the share of those (14.7 %) who estimate that parents see them as people who know how to provide knowledge, but not how to educate, increases. This may be the result of the fact that specialist subject teachers perceive themselves more as subject experts and view their own primary role as that of quality presenting the subject matter and leading pupils to quality knowledge and less as a general educator. This was apparent from one of the previous research projects where we discussed professional autonomy and responsibility of teachers (Marentič Požarnik et al., 2005).

As expected, parents were much more critical in their evaluation of teachers. Teachers were probably inclined to give the desired answers, since it is expected from them to both provide knowledge and educate, and as experts in

What is your general opinion of teachers?		
	f	f%
They are experts who know how to provide knowledge and educate	806	49.8
They know how to provide knowledge, but not how to educate	678	41.9
They are not experts	18	1.1
Other	115	7.1
Total	1617	100.0

Table 2: Parents' opinions about teachers

both they also want to be seen as such by parents. Parents' answers differed in a statistically significant degree from the teachers' answers ($\chi^2 = 1.849$; $df = 3$ $p = 0.000$, $n = 2063$).

Only half of parents (49.8 %) estimate that teachers are experts who know how to provide knowledge and educate. As many as 41.9 % of parents view that teachers know only how to present knowledge, but not how to educate. The category Other includes mostly responses from parents (7.1 %), that teachers differ a lot one from another and that such a judgment cannot be generalized to all teachers, since some are also excellent educators, while others do not get involved in education which consequently gives rise to the question whether they have chosen the right profession.

Parents' opinions about teachers show statistically significant difference in relation to their achieved education ($\chi^2 = 52.02$; $df = 6$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 1586$), their child's learning achievements ($\chi^2 = 25.59$; $df = 6$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 1603$) and the triad attended by their child ($\chi^2 = 34.23$; $df = 6$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 1608$), but not in relation to whether the child in question attends an urban or a non-urban school.

			What is your general opinion of teachers?				
			They are experts	They know how to provide knowledge, but not how to educate	They are not experts	Other	Total
Parents' education	PS +VS	F	283	168	8	12	471
		f%	60.1	35.7	1.7	2.5	100.0
	SS	F	319	331	9	54	713
		f%	44.7	46.4	1.3	7.6	100.0
	Coll.+Univ. and above	F	193	161	1	47	402
		f%	48.0	40.0	0.2	11.7	100.0
	Total	F	795	660	18	113	1586
		f%	50.1	41.6	1.1	7.1	100.0

Table 3: Parents' opinions about teachers in relation to their education

Legend: PS = Primary school; VS = Vocational school; SS = Secondary school; Coll. = College; Univ. = University

From the table above it follows that parents with primary and vocational education form the majority (60.1 %) which consider that teachers are experts for providing knowledge and education, while parents with at least secondary or further education point out to an increasing degree that teachers are only experts for providing knowledge or that there are vast differences among them (category Other). For parents with the lowest education level, teachers in most cases still represent experts for providing knowledge and education, while pa-

rents with higher levels of education more often doubt the teacher's expertise and are much more critical in their opinion of teachers. Above all, parents with the highest levels of education most often additionally explain their opinions and point out that teachers are varied and that it is difficult to give a single opinion of all teachers.

Parents of pupils of the first triad where descriptive assessment of knowledge is used, most often think that teachers are experts for both providing knowledge and education (58.2 %). *Getting closer to the ninth grade the share of those who consider them only as providing knowledge experts increases* (46.6 % of parents of children in the ninth class), as very different from one to another (9.3 % of parents) or even that they are not experts at all (2 % of parents). If we compare this finding with teachers' opinion of how parents see them, some teachers of the third triad assess more critically that parents see them only as providing knowledge experts, and not as experts for education. In addition, our research showed that parents with less achieving pupils less often viewed teachers as experts for education (51.5 % of parents think so).

It is also sensible to pose the question whether parents differ in their perception of teachers in relation to their own school experience⁵. Here we established statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 25.48$; $df = 6$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 1615$). *The worse the parents' experience from their own school years, the more they are critical of teachers*: the share of those that think that teachers are not experts for education is higher (49.3 %), and some even responded that teachers are neither experts for providing knowledge nor education (4.3 %). *This group of parents is especially difficult to involve in co-operation, since they do not trust teachers due to their own negative experiences*. The share of parents with negative experiences is significantly higher among parents with the lowest educational level ($\chi^2 = 28.42$; $df = 4$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 1630$): 6.7 % of the least educated parents estimate so, whereas only 1.2 % of parents with highest levels of education admit that they do not wish to recall their schooling due to negative experience. Teachers should consider how to involve this albeit small group of parents in co-operation, since there will always be parents who, due to their negative experiences, would prefer to avoid school or would approach the teacher with more distrust than others.

Certainly, the question whether parents see teachers as experts, mastering their professional work, is closely connected to the question of *who would parents believe if a dispute occurred between the child and his/her teacher*. It becomes evident that the vast majority (91.2 %) of parents would believe their child, but it is important that they express their readiness to discuss the problem with the teacher. Parents who answered »other« (1.6 %) mainly explain that both sides have to be heard, that it is necessary to define the problem and solve it together. 6.2 % of parents would doubt their child's judgment and consult the teacher. It

⁵ Parents were asked about their experience from their time at school. They could choose one of three possible answers: 1 – I don't wish to remember that period, because my experience was so bad; 2 – I had both good and bad experience; 3 – I mostly had very good experience.

is useful to pose the question who these parents are and what experiences lead them to distrust their child. Slightly higher number of these parents are less educated or their children have lower learning achievements. Higher educated parents explain in a greater degree that it is necessary to hear both sides.

Further we were interested in whether parents' reactions to emerging problems differ in respect to whether they would be more inclined to believe their child or the teacher, and in relation to their own schooling experiences. The differences proved to be statistically significant ($2\hat{I} = 23.30$; $df = 6$, $p = 0.001$, $n = 1650$). Among parents who have had bad experiences with teachers at the time of their schooling there is a greater share (6 %) of those who would completely trust their own child and would not discuss the matter with the teacher at all, compared to those who had mixed or good experience with teachers at the time of their schooling, as there are almost no parents who would not discuss the issue with the teacher. *Teachers have to bear in mind that it will be more difficult to reach some parents and establish good co-operation with them because of their previous negative experiences with teachers.* Parents' previous negative experience with teachers affects their present view of those who teach their children.

Do parents know how to be parents?

In establishing a partnership it is important for parents to competently fulfil their role, believe in their own powers and also for teachers to attribute them this power (O'Callaghan, 1993, quoted from Čačinovič-Vogrinič, 1999). We asked parents and teachers to what extent they agree with the statement that parents know how to be parents today and in their answers to this question both groups show statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 2.24$; $df = 4$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 2062$).

		Parents today know how to be parents.					
		I absolutely disagree	I don't agree	I partially agree	I agree	I absolutely agree	Total
Parents	f	20	76	651	663	198	1608
	f%	1.2	4.7	40.5	41.2	12.3	100.0
Teachers	f	4	52	329	67	2	454
	f%	0.9	11.5	72.5	14.8	0.4	100.0
Total	f	24	128	980	730	200	2062
	f%	1.2	6.2	47.5	35.4	9.7	100.0

Table 4: Presentation of parents' and teachers' attitudes towards the question whether parents today know how to be parents

More than half of parents (53.5 %) agree or absolutely agree with the statement that parents know how to be parents, while 40.5 % partially agree with the

statement and only a small percent of parents don't agree or don't agree at all (5.9%). Teachers are much more critical towards parents in responding to this question, as a mere 15.2 % of teachers agree with the statement, while 72.5 % of teachers partially agree and 12.4 % don't agree with the statement. *Teachers therefore doubt to a greater extent whether parents today can be parents – that they are experts in the area of their own child's development and education.* In their expression of doubt they do not show statistically important differences in relation to the time of teaching, or the triad and school where they teach. It is interesting to note that parents with higher education are much more critical towards themselves, as the share of parents partially agreeing with the statement grows with the increased level of their education (33.8 % to 46.2 % of the most educated parents), while the share of those who agree or absolutely agree with the statement (60.1 % to 46.7 % of the most educated parents) decreases. These differences among parents are statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 18.57$; $df = 8$, $p = 0.017$, $n = 1578$). Parents also differ in their views towards the statement in relation to whether their child attends an urban or non-urban school ($\chi^2 = 9.99$; $df = 4$, $p = 0.041$, $n = 1587$). Indeed, the share of parents of children attending an urban school who »don't agree« or »don't agree at all« that parents today know how to be parents is slightly larger (7.9 % : 4.8 %).

In relation to this we asked parents and teachers to what extent they agree with the statement that parents need to be additionally educated about parenting and problems of family education. In their response to this question both groups show statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 1.98$; $df = 4$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 2057$). A good third of parents (36.1 %) expressed that they agree with the statement that they need additional education on problems of family education, another good third of parents (35.3 %) partly agreed with it and less than a third of parents (28.6 %) expressed their disagreement. In contrast, as many as 65.1 % of teachers view that parents need additional family-related education, approximately one third (32.3 %) partially agrees and only 2.7 % of teachers do not agree. *Teachers are therefore inclined to view that parents need additional parenting-related education* and from their point of view planning of co-operation forms like »school for parents« enriches co-operation between the school and home. In their judgment teachers do not show statistically important differences in relation to the time of teaching, to the triad or the school where they teach. According to results *more than a third of parents will be responsive to such an offer*, while other parents are not convinced or have different expectations from the school. Again it shows that teachers can approach with such a proposal primarily parents with higher education. It is noteworthy that the highest share of parents of less achieving pupils (38.6 %) does not agree or does not agree at all with the statement that they need additional education on parenting and family education problems.

The results therefore show *that both groups express a degree of mutual doubt in the other's competence* and certainly it is difficult to build a partnership and fruitful co-operation on such grounds. It became clear that parents with higher education were more critical towards teachers and themselves, as well as

more inclined to undergo additional education on parenting and family education problems. Parents with lower education more often see teachers as experts for both providing knowledge and education. It is noteworthy that parents of less achieving pupils more often deny teachers their educational role while at the same time do not doubt their own role and are more often of the opinion that they do not need additional education related to parenting. These parents probably transpose responsibility for successful education of their child simply to the school and teachers, and these parents are, due to more frequent attitude that it is primarily school which is responsible for learning achievements, particularly hard to involve in more active co-operation. Besides, teachers have to pay special attention to parents who have negative experiences from the time of their schooling. Particular attitudes of both parents and teachers can therefore represent large obstacles on the road to a more fruitful co-operation between teachers and parents.

The attitudes which both groups assume influence the quality of mutual discussions.

What is the role of parents and teachers in mutual discussions?

Parents estimate teachers' competence of conducting parental meetings, consultations and co-operating with parents as good, as 55 % consider teachers to be quite well qualified, while as much as 40.3 % consider that they are excellently qualified. In this regard, teachers are more self critical as they less often consider themselves excellently qualified (9.7 %) and more often consider themselves to be quite well qualified (81.2 %). Let us now take a look at how both groups view a regular consultation meeting. In this perspective statistically significant differences appear among them ($\chi^2 = 1.49$; $df = 2$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 2057$).

		In what way do teachers usually conduct consultations with you?			
		They listen and take account of	They listen, but don't take account of	They suggest, I listen	Total
Parents	F	1014	113	495	1622
	F%	62.5	7.0	30.5	100.0
Teachers	F	399	23	13	435
	F%	91.7	5.3	3.0	100.0
Total	F	1413	136	508	2057
	F%	68.7	6.6	24.7	100.0

Table 5: Consultation meeting from the teachers' and parents' perspective

Almost all teachers (91.7 %) believe that parents listen to them and take their opinions and suggestions into account. In reality they probably see themselves as counsellors who suggest certain expert solutions. Only 3 % of teachers put themselves in the role of listeners where mainly parents voice their opinions

and offer suggestions. *Most parents (62.5 %) still experience teachers as listeners who take their opinions and suggestions into account, whereas one third (30.5 %) think that only teachers give opinions and suggestions and it is them who listen, while 7 % of parents point out that teachers listen to but do not take account of them.*

As we have established, teachers are more or less of the same opinion and their answers do not differ depending on the time of teaching, the triad or the school where they teach. However, parents do differ in their views of how the consultation is carried out in relation to their achieved education ($\chi^2 = 15.67$; $df = 4$, $p = 0.003$, $n = 1591$), their child's learning achievements ($\chi^2 = 28.17$; $df = 4$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 1607$) and the class attended by the child ($\chi^2 = 24.76$; $df = 4$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 1613$), but not in relation to the type of school the child attends.

		In what way do teachers usually conduct consultations with you?				
		They listen and take account of	They listen, but don't take account of	They suggest, I listen	Total	
Education:	PS +VS	f	299	25	140	464
		f%	64.4	5.4	30.2	100.0
	SS	f	426	49	248	723
		f%	58.9	6.8	34.3	100.0
	Coll.+Univ. and above	f	272	35	97	404
		f%	67.3	8.7	24.0	100.0
	Total	f	997	109	485	1591
		f%	62.7	6.9	30.5	100.0

Table 6: Parents' opinion of teacher's carrying out consultations as per education level achieved

In all groups parents who consider that teachers listen to and take account of their opinion and suggestions prevail, but this share is the smallest in the group of parents with secondary education (58.9 %). These parents believe to a greater degree than others that teachers primarily give opinions and suggestions while parents only listen (34.3 %). This answer is least present in the group of well educated parents (24 %) who, in comparison to others, most often point out that teachers listen, but do not take account of them (8.7 %). *Better educated parents are probably less ready to assume a subordinate role, where they would simply follow the teacher's opinions and suggestions.*

In the following text we will discuss parents' opinions on teachers' conducting of consultations per the child's learning achievements and class attended.

Most parents whose children attend the first triad where descriptive assessment of knowledge is used take the view that teachers listen to them and take their opinions into account (69 %). In contrast, some parents think it is mostly them who listen and teachers who suggest (27 %), while fewer of them think that teachers listen to them, but do not take them into account (4 %). *The number of parents who believe that teachers do not take them into account increases in each*

triad, while on the other hand the share of parents who estimate that teachers listen to them and take their opinions and suggestions into account decreases in correlation with the triad. It is probably in the first triad that the model of relations between teachers and parents is established to the greatest degree and where parents significantly contribute to their children’s education and enrich the curriculum (quoted from Hornby, 2000), since it seems that at the first level teachers are ready to accept parents as partners in the highest degree.

If we compare answers of parents per level of their child’s learning achievements, *parents of pupils with lower learning achievements predominantly see themselves in the role of receiving teachers’ advice (39.2 %)*. Parents of higher achieving pupils point out most often in comparison to others that teachers listen, but do not take account of them (9.2 %). In each next triad, parents are more and more pushed into a subordinate role, which the parents of less achieving pupils are more ready to accept.

In relation to analysis of carrying out consultations it is worth reviewing the expectations of both groups regarding their roles. Therefore we asked teachers and parents about their attitudes regarding offering specific teacher advice and looking for a mutual solution to an emerging problem.

Expectations of teachers and parents regarding teacher’s advising are quite unified, since both groups predominantly agree or absolutely agree (70.1 % of teachers and 74.7 % parents) that teachers have to offer concrete advice to overcome a child’s problem when they occur, while less than a quarter of both groups only partially agree. Respondents that did not agree were almost nonexistent (5 % of teachers and 3.3 % of parents).

		Teachers have to give concrete advice to overcome a child’s problems when they occur.					
		I absolutely disagree	I don’t agree	I partially agree	I agree	I absolutely agree	Total
Parents	F	6	52	346	787	405	1596
	F%	0.4	3.3	21.7	49.3	25.4	100.0
Teachers	F	2	21	112	221	96	452
	F%	0.4	4.6	24.8	48.9	21.2	100.0
Total	F	8	73	458	1008	501	2048
	F%	0.4	3.6	22.4	49.2	24.5	100.0

Table 7: Shares of teachers’ and parents’ attitudes regarding teachers giving concrete advice in relation to a child’s problems

In expectations regarding teacher’s giving advice when children have problems, parents do not differ in a statistically significant degree regarding the learning achievement of their child, the class or the school he or she attends. We have noted the tendency that, together with the level of education, the share of those who partially agree with giving advice increases (from 19.5 % to 27.2 %), while the share of those who agree diminishes (from 75.7 % to 69.9 %).

Teachers show a statistically significant difference in their attitudes about giving advice depending on the triad which they teach ($2\hat{I} = 25.15$; $df = 8$, $p = 0.001$, $n = 437$): from one triad to the other, the share of those who agree increases only partially (from 14.8 % to 32.7 %) and shares of those who agree or absolutely agree (from 80.7 % to 60.6 %) diminish. It appears that teachers are more and more aware from one triad to the other that active involvement of all affected parties is necessary for effective problem-solving. But the question arises whether this awareness is also acted upon, as it contradicts the opinion of parents concerning teachers' performance during consultations. From one triad to the other the percentage of parents who estimate that they only listen to teachers or that teachers listen to them but do not take their opinions and suggestions into account, increases. In addition, the overwhelming majority of teachers and parents agree that in case of a child's troubles teachers have to give concrete advice to overcome such problems, which shows *that the prevailing relationship between teachers and parents places the teacher in a superior role of an expert in all aspects, and this is contrary to the attitude that teachers, in case of a child's troubles, have to be ready for mutual searching of solutions and problem solving, with which a great majority of teachers and parents agree.* In comparison to parents, significantly more teachers absolutely agree (59.3 % : 46 %), while there are fewer teachers who agree (38.3 % : 46.4 %) or agree partially (2 % : 6.4 %). These differences proved to be statistically significant ($2\hat{I} = 35.85$; $df = 4$, $p = 0.000$, $n = 2073$).

		When a child has a problem, teachers have to be ready to look for solutions together with involved parties.					
		I absolutely disagree	I don't agree	I partially agree	I agree	I absolutely agree	Total
Parents	F	2	17	103	752	745	1619
	F%	0.1	1.1	6.4	46.4	46.0	100.0
Teachers	F	0	2	9	174	269	454
	F%	0.0	0.4	2.0	38.3	59.3	100.0
Total	F	2	19	112	926	1014	2073
	F%	0.1	0.9	5.4	44.7	48.9	100.0

Table 8: Shares of teachers' and parents' attitudes regarding teacher's readiness to look for solutions with other involved parties.

Teachers do not show statistically important differences in their attitude on mutual searching for solutions in relation to the time of teaching, to the triad or the school where they teach. Again it became obvious that especially parents with higher education expect mutual problem solving when their child has problems ($2\hat{I} = 21.76$; $df = 8$, $p = 0.005$, $n = 1590$). There is also a tendency that parents of less achieving pupils are to a smaller extent convinced that teachers have to be prepared to look for other solutions together with other involved parties when their child has problems.

In one of the previous research projects conducted in Slovenia by Kalin (2003) about expectations of grammar school students' parents it became evident that parents mostly expect teachers to understand their children, follow their work and help them in case of problems. The next highest ranking parents' expectation – expectation for the class teachers to co-operate with them and counsel them in case of troubles – follows. Thus parents expect teachers to correctly deal with the situation and only after this fails, to involve others if necessary. Teachers may be aware to a slightly larger extent that mutual problem-solving is more efficient. Most respondents (51.6 %) also point out that they would need additional training in the area of problem solving and conflicts when parents have to be included. Involving parents of less achieving pupils and less educated parents in co-operation and problem solving presents an especially difficult challenge for teachers.

Although most parents (62.5 %) estimate that teachers listen to them and take their opinions and suggestions into account, it seems that in our environment the expert and possibly the transmission models of teacher-parent relationships are still widely present (quoted from Hornby, 2000). This particularly applies to the second and the third triad. Teachers are supposed to be experts in all aspects of development and education of children and when a child has problems, teachers should give concrete advice to overcome such problems. Within the transmission model, parents assume a slightly more significant role in supporting teacher's endeavours and in carrying out teacher's measures; however, their role is still subordinate. Parents with higher education are particularly less willing to accept such a submissive role as others. But some teachers, probably based on previous experience, reach the conclusion that mutual problem-solving can be more effective.

Conclusions

It has become evident that teachers' and parents' views of the competence of each other and of conducting mutual discussion differ significantly. Doubt in each other's competence – when only half of parents (49.8 %) estimate that teachers are experts for providing knowledge and education, and the vast majority of teachers (72.5 %) only partly agrees with the statement that »today parents know how to be parents« – is not a good basis upon which to establish a partnership and quality co-operation of both groups.

Further analysis of their views on conducting discussions and their attitudes regarding the expectations which they have towards themselves and towards each other shows that the expert or the transmission model of teacher-parent relationships are still very much present (quoted from Hornby, 2000), particularly at the second and third triads. Teachers are supposed to be experts in all aspects of development and education of children and when a child has problems, teachers should give concrete advice to help solve such problems. Within the transmission model parents assume a slightly more significant role

in supporting teacher's endeavours and in carrying out teacher's measures, but still have a subordinate role. Many parents find this convenient, but teachers have to bear in mind that parents are an extremely varied group. Parents with higher education will be less willing to accept such a subordinate role as they want to be heard by teachers and to a greater extent involved in mutual problem solving. Parents of less achieving children may wait passively for the teacher's incentives or may even not dare express their own opinion, which certainly does not contribute to successful problem solving. This group of parents has negative past experience with teachers, are less educated, will doubt even more than others in the teacher and his or her expertise, and will most often try to avoid coming to school. In addition, how to attract the so-called more demanding parents into co-operation is an especially difficult challenge for teachers.

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Preschool and family environment as predictors of language competence of 6 years old children

Abstract: This study examines different factors of children's language competence at 6 years of age, namely the duration of child's enrolment into preschool, parental education, characteristics of home environment and child's intellectual abilities. The sample included 147 Slovenian children, approximately 6 years old, who were attending first grade at the time of the assessment. Prior to primary school children attended preschool for 5, 3, or 0 years. The findings suggest that parental education and home environment along with child's gender and intellectual abilities represent important predictors of child's language competence as they explain a substantial share of variance in children's language comprehension, expression, meta-linguistic awareness and storytelling ability. The duration of child's enrolment into preschool explains only a small share of additional variance in language comprehension, expression and storytelling ability and an important share of variance in children's meta-linguistic awareness. The duration of child's enrolment into preschool is an important predictor of his/her storytelling ability. Children who, prior to entering primary school, attended preschool for three years, told stories on the highest developmental levels. The findings were interpreted in the light of the role of child's home environment and the opportunities offered by different preschool activities for supporting toddler's/child's language development.

Key words: language competence, storytelling, preschool curriculum, parental education, family environment.

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Introduction

As in the process of language learning children internalize different aspects of culture and its symbolic system, it is important for child's language development, which develops rapidly in toddlerhood and early childhood, both from the quantitative and qualitative aspects, for a child to be exposed to a symbolically rich environment, which provides a quality support to the development of language, e.g. frequent social interactions between adults and infants/toddlers, responsive and sensitive communication and conversations with children, encouraging children to spontaneous storytelling, joint reading of children's books, watching the children's programme on TV with a child, encouraging children to involve in higher levels of symbolic play, providing suitable children's books, magazines and other written material. Child's language develops in a broader context of his/her cognitive and social abilities.

Language development and learning

Approximately by the age of 5 or 6 years the development of all the key aspects of child's language (comprehension, expression and meta-linguistic awareness) reaches the level which enables him/her to comprehend the speech of other persons as well as to communicate with peers and adults in such ways that his/her speech is understandable to them independently of a certain context (e.g. Clark and Clark, 1977; Marjanovič Umek, 1990).

In toddlerhood child's vocabulary develops very rapidly, while toddlers comprehend different words earlier than being able to use them. The toddler's and child's vocabulary, which develops in parallel with the development of syntax, already includes e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, copulas, auxiliary verbs (e.g. Karmiloff and Karmiloff Smith, 2001). Bates and Goodman (2001) established that the size of toddler's vocabulary at the age of 20 months, highly predicted (the correlations were between 0.70 and 0.84) the toddler's acquisition of the

syntax at the age of 28 months. To be able to combine several words into a sentence, children have to acquire the word-order of their language, while creating the questions or negative clauses, children have to learn how to combine words in different ways and through the period of incorrect generalization of syntax rules they progress in acquiring different syntax forms (Akhta, 2001; Karmiloff and Karmiloff – Smith, 2001).

From the age of four years onwards, children gradually develop their meta-linguistic awareness, which includes understanding of single units of the language system (words, syllables, sounds); understanding of the relation between the form of the words and the meaning which they represent as well as the understanding of the syntax (e.g. Astinton and Pelletier, 1996). The meta-linguistic awareness enables children to use language on the symbolic level or as Kress (1996) states, in the process of representation language takes on the role of inner »dialogue« or is used as a translation medium or semiotic solution.

In toddlerhood and especially in the early childhood child's pragmatic ability of storytelling develops. The storytelling includes representational ability and the ability to decentralize and sustain thought, as well as the adoption of various perspectives, the use of diverse vocabulary and meta-language, and the ability to connect events, thoughts, and people's emotions in terms of time, space, and cause, as well as their social relationships (e.g., Fox, 2003; Karmiloff & Karmiloff, 2001; van Oers, 2007). Toddlers, aged approximately 2 years, tell their first stories using a simple structure or personal stories, in which they string together events from their everyday lives (e.g., Broström, 2002; Fein, 1995). Stories typical of 2 to 3 years old toddlers already include certain criteria of a structured story, such as a title, a beginning and conclusion, and the use of past tense (Broström, 2002). In early childhood children tell increasingly structured and conventional stories. They build the story at the representational level and include real and imaginary persons; the structure of a story, which they usually create around the main character, is conventional, they use logical temporal and causal connections, describe people's motives and emotions, build the story as a chain, use the past tense, imitate the speech of various characters using different intonation and voice colour, and use meta-language (e.g., Applebee, 1978; Winner, 1988). In one study, Marjanovič Umek, Fekonja and Kranjc (2004) designed and used criteria to assess the coherence and cohesion of stories told by children 4 to 8 years old (divided into three age groups: Group 1 = 4;0 to 4;6 years; Group 2 = 6;1 to 6;6 years; Group 3 = 7;6 to 8;2 years) based on the picture book *The Princess and the Pea*. They established significant differences between the children in the developmental level of the stories told in terms of coherence and cohesion. The youngest children most frequently told stories with a simple structure, using thematic leaps and a great deal of repetition (e.g., »Once a king went to look for a wife. Here he's sad.«). The 6-year-olds described events in chronological order significantly more often than the 4-year-olds, albeit still quite statically. In contrast, the majority of stories told by 8-year-olds were structured, containing descriptions of the characters' thoughts and feelings. These children established appropriate relationships and connections between the characters, and even incorporated

cause-and-effect relationships into their stories. The stories told by both 6- and 8-year-olds frequently contained a linear thematic organization without thematic leaps (e.g., »Once there was a prince that wanted a princess. And so he looked for her all over the world.«); these children also used frequent pronouns, hypernyms, and hyponyms.

The development of language is in the early childhood connected to child's cognitive development. Language as a symbolic system enables children to achieve the symbolic or abstract level of thinking which is more flexible and fluent as well as to develop higher levels of social cognition. The connection can be also vice-versa: the process of thinking on developmentally advanced levels encourages the use of more advanced language structures, diverse vocabulary, synonymous and metaphors as well as more complex utterances. Researchers (e.g. Hresko, Reid and Hamill, 1999) established moderate to high correlations ($r = 0.33 - 0.59$) between different measures of children's intellectual abilities and their general language competence.

The role of family environment and preschool in child's language development

One of the characteristics of the family environment most frequently and significantly connected with various aspects of children's development is parental education (Duncun & Magnuson, 2003). Findings of several studies confirm that toddlers and children of highly educated mothers start speaking earlier, have a larger vocabulary, use longer and more complex sentences when communicating with others, tell stories at higher developmental levels, and score higher on language development scales than toddlers and children of mothers with lower education (e.g., Apostolos & Napoleon, 2001; Bornstein & Haynes, 1998; Duncun & Magnuson, 2003; Fenson et al., 1994; Marjanovič Umek & Fekonja Peklaj, 2006). As a rule, maternal education is related to the quality of stimulating the development of children's language in the family environment. Mothers with higher education, who generally know more about children's developmental characteristics and early teaching, offer their children a higher-quality family environment regarding both the material environment (e.g., children's books and magazines, appropriate toys) and appropriate activities (e.g., joint reading, conversation, visiting cultural events for children) (e.g. Bornstein, Hahn, Suwalsky, & Haynes, 2003; Hoff, 2003a). Less educated mothers talk to toddlers and children less frequently, their vocabulary is not as diverse, they offer their children fewer opportunities for verbal expression and storytelling, their children have fewer books and other materials for early literacy development, and they participate less frequently in various activities with their toddlers and children (e.g., Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, & Coll, 2001; Butler et al., 2003; Hoff, 2003a, 2003b; McCartney, Dearing, Taylor, & Bub, 2007).

Various researchers (e.g., Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Silvén et al., 2003) have dedicated special attention to the role of joint reading by parents and children. Their findings indicate that this contributes significantly to the development of children's language competence. By frequently reading children's literature out

loud and through their manner of reading, parents influence the development of children's storytelling and their later development of reading skills; during joint reading children also learn the language and basic elements typical of a story, and they tell their own stories based on the book. Toddlers whose parents often read them stories out loud between ages 1 and 3, talk with their parents about the story read, and use a large vocabulary, reflect more advanced verbal skills even later on (i.e., between ages 2 and 5) and understand the text read better at age 7 than children whose parents only rarely include them in joint reading (Crain-Thoreson & Dale, 1992).

According to Cairney (2003), the ongoing cooperation between the parents and preschool teachers is important for the development of child's language as it encourages children to tell stories about home and preschool events, to describe various social situations and their participants, and to recall stories in children's books that their parents or their preschool teachers read to them.

Various preschool activities: planned, routine, or transitional activities, and free play differ in terms of the structure level or the set goals, the inclusion of an adult and peers in social groups, and thus also their use of language. Fekonja, Marjanovič Umek, and Kranjc (2005) studied the speech of 4- to 5-year-old children during various preschool activities – that is, during a routine activity (breakfast), free play, and a planned language-related activity (reading a children's book with a group of children). They established that the characteristics of children's speech differed significantly according to which of the three preschool activities was taking place. During free play the children talked more frequently than at breakfast and during joint reading of a story; in addition, they used significantly more multi-word, interrogative, and negative sentences than during the other two activities. In addition, children used a greater variety of language functions during free play (e.g., regulatory, imaginative, personal, and interactive functions) than at breakfast and during the planned activity. While interpreting the results, the authors highlighted certain weaknesses connected with preschool teachers reading to children, such as: after the book had been read, preschool teachers often constructed questions that demanded short answers and merely fact-based language use from the children; preschool teachers paid too little attention to whether the children were listening and following the story; they included only a few children from the group in the discussion during and after joint reading. These weaknesses may have well influenced the significant difference between the use of language during planned activity and free play. Similarly Baldock (2006) suggests that joint reading of stories at preschool is often done inappropriately and preschool therefore cannot sufficiently make up for a lower-quality family environment. He establishes that preschool teachers frequently used reading and telling stories merely to focus the children's attention and as an introduction to more »serious« planned activities, such as learning the alphabet and colors, getting to know printed material, developing basic mathematical concepts, and learning about animals, or as an activity that relaxes children or lulls them to sleep. He agrees that reading stories can be used as an introduction to other activities, but he also draws attention to the

fact that joint reading at preschools is often over-simplified. Joint reading at preschool has a positive effect on children's storytelling only if it is high-quality and also includes (for example) discussion involving the book, asking open questions, and seeking various ways to present literature (e.g., symbolic play or drawing) (Anning, 2003; Pellegrini & Galda, 1998; Silvén, Ahtola, & Niemi, 2003). Meek (1985) established that joint reading by teachers and children at preschool is effective only if the preschool teacher reads to the children out loud, with appropriate intonation and changes in voice, and appropriate stresses. Anning (2003) places special emphasis on the significance of forming smaller groups in which children listening to a fairytale or a story discuss its content and convey their thoughts, views, and feelings in a way that their peers can understand them.

One of the key activities within the preschool setting which supports the development of language comprehension, expression and meta-linguistic awareness is symbolic play. One study by Pellegrini and Galda (1993) confirmed the important role of symbolic play, also in comparison with some other preschool activities, for the development of cognitive and linguistic abilities of children of various age. The study sample included three age groups: Group 1 averaged 5;9 years old; Group 2 averaged 7;3 years; and Group 3 averaged 8;0 years. Each group was divided into a further three subgroups based on whether – after reading fairytales or stories (e.g., *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, and *The Three Bears*) to children on a daily basis as part of a special program – the preschool teachers encouraged children to draw the stories, discuss the stories while reading, or use symbolic (socio-dramatic) play. After the four-week program was concluded, the test administrator read *Little Red Riding Hood* to the children and then asked them to tell the story by themselves. The analysis of the stories told by the children revealed that the highest developmental level of the story was achieved by the children in the subgroups in which symbolic play was performed; they were followed by the children in the subgroups in which they talked about a story read, whereas the children in the subgroups in which they drew the stories achieved the lowest developmental level. The stories differed in terms of both social and linguistic criteria. Symbolic play provided children a context within which they decided upon and negotiated about various roles and sought logical cognitive and linguistic transformations, which they also »transferred« to storytelling. Thus their stories were coherent, containing many cognitive and linguistic turns and transformations. As a rule, children in subgroups in which they talked about the stories read »saw« and understand the story merely from their own personal viewpoint, which was also reflected in the stories they told. They contained few cognitive and linguistic turns requiring children to assume another child's perspective; in addition, their stories were static and relatively simple. Similar one-dimensional stories were also told by children in the subgroups in which they drew the stories read. The stories told primarily represented a short summary of the story read and only rarely contained a social and cognitive perspective; in addition, these stories were simple in terms of surface structure and language use. The results, which show a significant role of symbolic play in the development of children's storytelling, were the same in all three age groups of children included in the study.

The findings of other studies also show a significant positive correlation between symbolic play and language development, especially in the use of language and meta-linguistic awareness (e.g., Jarrold, Carruthers, Smith, & Boucher, 1994; Marjanovič Umek, Lešnik Musek, & Kranjc, 2001). According to Korat, Bahar, & Snapir (2003), symbolic play is a suitable context in which preschool teachers can encourage the development and learning of symbolic expression of preschool children in a zone of proximal development. The authors report that 5;6- to 6;6-year-old children played at higher developmental levels during symbolic play when their preschool teachers followed the principles of teaching and learning in a zone of proximal development (e.g., used questions to create cognitive dissonance in children, indirectly oriented children to seek various symbolic ways of recording transmitted information, or created situations in which players had to decide on the activities, as well as explain and plan them). This was primarily connected with greater language competence, more explicit use of language, use of language in cognitive transformations, and use of various symbolic means (drawings, letters, and numbers).

Several authors (e.g., Caughy, DiPietro, & Strobino, 1994; Lamb, 1998; McCartney, Dearing, Taylor, & Bub, 2007) have established that the effect of a high-quality preschool is a protective factor in the language development of children from families with less favorable demographic factors. One Slovenian longitudinal study (Marjanovič Umek & Fekonja, 2006) included 155 children 3 to 6 years old and monitored the effect of preschool on children's verbal understanding and expression. Its findings showed that the effect of mere inclusion of children in preschool on their language development is small and insignificant and, at the same time, it is also connected with other factors, especially maternal education. The authors report that maternal education had a significant effect on the language competence of 3- and 5-year-olds that entered preschool at the age of three, whereas it had no significant effect on the group of children that entered preschool when they were one year old. Based on the findings, the authors conclude that early enrollment in preschool primarily encourages the development of language (e.g., vocabulary, acquisition of grammatical rules, and meta-language) in children of mothers with a low education, or may make up for certain shortfalls in language development probably connected with a lower-quality family environment.

This study examines the role of preschool, characteristics of home environment (maternal and paternal education, quality of the support for language development) and child's intellectual abilities in different aspects of language competence (language comprehension, expression, meta-linguistic awareness and storytelling) of 6-year old children.

Method

Participants

Data of the present study was collected in a broader longitudinal study

on the effect of preschool on child's development, namely in the last year of the study, when children were six years old and have already entered the primary school. The primary sample included children aged approximately three years from 17 different preschools. The preschool institutions were selected taking into account different Slovenian regions. When children were approximately six years old and have entered the first grade of primary school, all the schools attended by the children from the primary sample, were included into the study. An additional sample of children, who did not attend preschool prior to entering primary school, was also collected at these schools. The sample of the present study included 147 children, 73 boys and 74 girls. 52 children were included into preschool from their first year of life (they attended preschool for five years prior to the assessment), 49 children were included into preschool from their third year of life (they attended preschool for three years prior to the assessment) and 46 children were not included into preschool before entering primary school. All the children were monolingual Slovenian speakers. Mothers of the children had on average 13.0 years of formal education (SD = 2.4 years) and fathers had on average 12.2 years of formal education (SD = 2.3 years).

Materials

Children's language competence was assessed with the *Scales of General Language Development – LJ (SGLD – LJ)* (Marjanovič Umek, Fekonja, Podlesek, Kranjc, & Bajc, 2004). The language development scales include three scales: *Language Comprehension Scale (LCS)*, *Language Expression Scale (LES)* and *Meta-linguistic Awareness Scale (MAS)*. They are intended to assess the language development of children from 2 to 7 years old. The *LCS* is composed of sets of tasks that relate to comprehension of instructions; words signifying parts of the body, spatial concepts, quantity, relations between persons or objects, qualities, persons and their property, colours; understanding time sequence in stories; negation; understanding the use of objects and understanding actions and the results of actions.

The *LES* is composed of sets of tasks that relate to children's vocabulary; pronoun use; the use of words signifying qualities; expressing actions and states in the present; past and future; use of the plural and dual; the use of words signifying spatial relations; quantity; negation; questions; story narration; hypernyms; explaining words; the use of words signifying social relations; compounding and subordination; the use of direct and reported speech; declension. The *MAS* includes 5 groups of tasks that relate to verbs of speaking; children's ability to correct errors, distinguishing between long and short words, supplying the last word in a sentence, and supplying the first and last sounds in a word. The test administrator conducts the tasks on all three subscales with the help of various play items, pictures or presents the tasks verbally. Correct answers are given various numbers of points (from 1 to 5) on various tasks, and the points within individual subscales are added together. Thus three partial results are achieved: an assessment of children's language comprehension, language expression, and

meta-linguistic awareness. *SGLD – LJ* is standardized on a sample of Slovene toddlers and children and have suitable psychometric characteristics.

Children's storytelling was assessed using the *Storytelling Test*. Children told stories based on six illustrations from the children's picture book *Snežaki v vrtcu* (The Snowmen in Preschool, 1994; written by Branka Jurca, illustrated by Ančka Gošnik Godec). The illustrations were realistic and logically connected. The stories told by the children were analyzed in terms of coherence and cohesiveness using criteria that enable a valid and objective assessment of the story's developmental level (Marjanovič Umek, Kranjc, & Fekonja, 2006).

The criteria used for analyzing the story's coherence were the following: a story without a structure (1 point); a story with a structure containing simple descriptions of characters, objects, or illustrations (2 points); a story with a structure containing a simple chronology of events (3 points); a story with a structure containing descriptions of the characters' thoughts and feelings, and the relationships between them (4 points); a story with a structure containing descriptions of cause-and-effect relationships (5 points).

The criteria used for analyzing the story's cohesiveness were divided into two groups:

- A. Thematic organization – linear organization with thematic leaps (1 point) and linear organization without thematic leaps (2 points);
- B. Preserving reference – full repetition (1 point) and the use of pronouns, hypernyms, hyponyms, and so on (2 points).

In assessing the story's coherence and defining its developmental level, the highest developmental level achieved by children in telling their stories was taken into account (e.g., if children used cause-and-effect relationships in their stories, their stories were ranked the highest in terms of their developmental level, even if they also used a simple chronology of events and descriptions of characters' thoughts and feelings that belong to a lower developmental level). In assessing the story's cohesiveness and ranking the story in terms of its developmental level, the predominant method of storytelling used was taken into account (e.g., if throughout the story children used a predominantly linear organization of consecutive events without thematic leaps, their stories scored at the second developmental level in thematic organization).

Children's intellectual abilities were assessed using the Raven's *Coloured Progressive Matrices Test (CPM)* (Raven, Raven, & Court, 1999), a test of general intellectual abilities. *Coloured Progressive Matrices Test (CPM)* includes a set of nonverbal multiple choice tasks. Children complete a matrix by selecting the appropriate missing pattern from a set of six alternatives. The *CPM* comprises 36 items divided into three sets of 12, ordered in terms of increasing difficulty. The test can be administered individually or to a group, and was designed specifically for children between ages 5 and 11.

The children's family environment was assessed using the *Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire: 5–6 years (HLEQ: 5–6)* (Marjanovič Umek, Fekonja, & Bajc, 2006). This questionnaire contains 34 statements describing the ways in which parents talk to their children (e.g., *When talking to my child*

I use grammatically correct sentences) and how parents encourage their children's language development (e.g., *I visit the library with my child.*). Parents used a 6-point scale to mark the frequency of the behaviour described or activity performed with the child, on which 1 indicated »never or very rarely,« and 6 indicated »very frequently or always.« The items in the questionnaire were combined into 3 factors of family environment quality: *Reading and Conversation (F1)*, *Academic Skills (F2)*, and *Correct Use of Language (F3)*.

Data on maternal education (years of formal education completed) and on the age at which their children entered preschool were obtained using the *Demographic Questionnaire*.

Procedure

The parents of all the children gave their written consent allowing their children to participate in the study. Children were tested twice by specially trained testators at the primary schools they attended. They were individually tested with the *SGLD – LJ*, *Storytelling test* and *CPM*. The testators transcribed the stories told freely by the children while looking at the pictures. *HLEQ: 5–6* and the *Demographic Questionnaire* were distributed to primary school teachers and preschool teachers at primary schools, who then forwarded them to the children's mothers. Mothers assessed their behaviour and different ways of supporting child's language development. Both questionnaires were returned a sealed envelope to the school, where the test administrators collected them.

Results

First we examined the shape of the distributions. Among the criterion variables, scores on the *Storytelling test* were normally distributed, whereas scores on all *SGLD – LJ* scales had non-normal distributions (with negative asymmetry and leptocurtosis), which is why the scores on *SGLD – LJ* were normalized. After that, all the bivariate relations between different predictors (child's gender, mother's and father's education level, duration of child's preschool education, quality of home literacy environment, and child's score on *CPM*) and criteria became linear (normality of criterion's distribution and linearity of bivariate relations between predictors and criteria are necessary conditions for the correct interpretation of the results of regression analysis). The only exception was duration of child's preschool education, which showed a non-linear relation to all four criteria. This is why two dummy variables were introduced in the analysis, *preschool1* and *preschool2*. If the child did not attend preschool, both dummy variables had a value of 0. Value 0 on dummy variable *preschool1* indicated that the child did not attend preschool, and value 1 indicated that the child attended preschool. If the child obtained value 1 also on the second dummy variable, *preschool2*, she had attended preschool for five years, whereas the value 0 indicated three years of preschool education or less.

All interval predictors were entered into regression analysis in the first block (model *Enter*), and the two dummy variables addressing duration of preschool education were entered in the second block. This enabled us to assess the proportion of the criterion variance explained by the characteristics of children and their home (literacy) environment, and the proportion of the criterion variance explained by children's preschool education.

Girls did not significantly differ from boys in any of the criteria (see Table 1), so we subsequently analysed data from both genders together.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> (145)	<i>p</i>
Storytelling test				
boys	6.21	1.04	0.61	.55
girls	6.31	1.08		
LCS				
boys	-0.05	1.01	0.54	.59
girls	0.04	0.95		
LES				
boys	-0.09	0.96	1.02	.31
girls	0.08	1.00		
MAS				
boys	-0.09	0.89	0.91	.37
girls	0.05	1.00		

Table 1: Comparison of girls and boys in criterion variables

Note: LCS – Language comprehension scale, LES – Language expression scale, MAS – Meta-linguistic awareness scale. Scores on LCS, LES and MAS were normalized.

Correlations between variables are shown in Table 2. Correlations between predictors and criteria were mainly low to moderate. Mother's education (in years) correlates positively with all four criteria. The correlation of father's education (in years) with scores on *SGLD – LJ* is positive, but somewhat lower than the correlation of mother's education with the same criteria. On the other hand, father's education correlates higher than mother's education with the scores on *Storytelling test*. The correlation between scores on *SGLD – LJ* and scores on *CPM* are positive and low to moderate. Home literacy environment seems to be weakly related to child's language competency. Statistically significant are only the positive correlations between *F1 (Reading and conversation)* and *F3 (Correct use of language)* with child's score on *MAS*, and the correlation between *F1 (Reading and conversation)* and *LCS* score. We can also notice that five years of preschool education, in comparison with shorter duration, are related to lower scores on *Storytelling test* and *MAS*.

	Story	LCS	LES	MAS	gender	EDm	EDf	F1	F2	F3	Pre-school1	Pre-school2	CPM
Story	1												
LCS	.241**	1	.467**	.383**	.044	.310**	.142	.051	.051	.192*	.058	-.045	.243**
LES	.602**	.467**	1	.417**	.085	.355**	.262**	-.037	-.016	.086	.147	-.028	.285**
MAS	.267**	.383**	.417**	1	.075	.270**	.170*	.184*	.112	.201*	-.041	-.227**	.328**
gender	.050	.044	.085	.075	1	.035	.070	-.013	-.005	-.006	.034	-.033	.015
EDm	.185*	.310**	.355**	.270**	.035	1	.460**	.076	-.107	.262**	.224**	.005	.263**
EDf	.239**	.142	.262**	.170*	.070	.460**	1	.141	-.164*	.111	.087	-.092	.217**
F1	.001	.051	-.037	.184*	-.013	.076	.141	1	.329**	.415**	.120	-.082	.013
F2	.070	.051	-.016	.112	-.005	-.107	-.164*	.329**	1	.556**	-.111	-.217**	-.058
F3	.085	.192*	.086	.201*	-.006	.262**	.111	.415**	.556**	1	.061	-.113	-.015
Pre-school1	.026	.058	.147	-.041	.034	.224**	.087	.120	-.111	.061	1	--	.173*
Pre-school2	-.194*	-.045	-.028	-.227**	-.033	.005	-.092	-.082	-.217**	-.113	--	1	.005
CPM	.178*	.243**	.285**	.328**	.015	.263**	.217**	.013	-.058	-.015	.173*	.005	1

Table 2: Correlations (Pearson correlation coefficients) among studied variables

Note: Story – score on the *Storytelling test*; LCS – score on *Language Comprehension Scale*; LES – score on *Language Expression Scale*; MAS – score on *Meta-linguistic Awareness Scale*; EDm – mother’s education (in years); EDf – father’s education (in years); F1 – first factor of family literacy environment: *Reading and conversation*; F2 – second factor of family literacy environment: *Academic skills*; F3 – third factor of family literacy environment: *Correct use of language*; Preschool1 – dummy variable that differentiates between children not attending preschool (value 0) and children attending preschool (value 1); Preschool2 – dummy variable that differentiates between children attending preschool for five years (value 1) and children attending preschool for three years or not attending preschool (value 0); CPM – score on *Coloured progressive matrices*; -- calculating correlation would have no meaning.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Regression analysis (Table 3) showed that our predictors can explain a statistically significant proportion of the variance of all four criteria: of *Storytelling test* score ($F [9, 137] = 2.26, p = .021, MSE = 1.04$), of *LCS* score ($F [9, 137] = 2.94, p = .003, MSE = 14.95$), of *LES* score ($F [9, 137] = 3.44, p = .001, MSE = 24.42$), and of *MAS* score ($F [9, 137] = 3.34, p = .001; MSE = 22.52$). In hierarchic regression, where child’s gender, parental education, home literacy environment and child’s nonverbal intelligence were entered into the model as the first block of variables, and dummy variables indicating duration of preschool education were entered as the second block of variables, it was found that the first block of variables explained 9.8% of variance in *Storytelling test* score ($F [7, 139] = 2.16, p = .042$) and the second block of variables explained additional 3.2% of variance ($F [2, 137] = 2.50, p = .086$). The first block of variables explained 16.1%

of variance of *LCS* score ($F [7, 139] = 3.81, p = .001$), 18.2% of variance of *LES* score ($F [7, 139] = 4.42, p = .000$) and 14.2% of variance of *MAS* score ($F [7, 139] = 3.28, p = .003$). The second block of variables added only a little to the explanation of variance of *LCS* and *LES* scores, namely only 0.1% of variance of the first ($F [2, 137] = 0.06, p = .947$) and 0.2% of variance of the second ($F [2, 137] = 0.21, p = .815$) was explained by duration of preschool education. However, the second block of variables added significantly to the prediction of *SMA* score—it explained additional 3.8% of its variance ($F [2, 137] = 3.20, p = .044$).

Table 3 shows regression coefficients for all the predictors. The first column contains unstandardized regression coefficients, which indicate an increase in the value of criterion if the value of the predictor increases for one unit and the values of all other variables remain constant. Column *Beta* contains standardized regression coefficients (they represent the change in criterion expressed in units of standard deviation, when the predictor value increases for one standard deviation and all other variables are controlled for), which indicate the relative efficiency of each predictor in explaining the variance of the criterion. Whereas *SGLD – LJ* scores, i.e. scores on *LCS*, *LES* and *MAS*, are statistically significantly predicted by mother's education and child's *CPM* score, the *Storytelling test* score is predicted best by father's education and duration of child's preschool education. In this test, holding the values of other predictors constant, a year more of father's education is related to 0.09 point increase in test score. Because within the block of variables related to duration of preschool education, only *preschool2* is statistically significant, we can conclude that children who attended preschool for three years or did not attend preschool differ statistically significantly in storytelling competence from children who attended preschool for five years. Holding the values of other predictors constant, children who attended preschool would attain 0.24 point higher score than children who did not attend preschool; while children who attended preschool for five years would achieve 0.48 point lower score than children who attended preschool for three years or did not attend preschool.

		<i>b</i>	<i>SE(b)</i>	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Storytelling						
	Constant	4.16	0.94	0.00	4.42	.000
	Gender	0.04	0.17	0.02	0.26	.792
	EDm	0.03	0.04	0.07	0.69	.493
	EDf	0.09	0.04	0.19	1.99	.049
	F1	-0.01	0.01	-0.10	-1.08	.283
	F2	0.02	0.02	0.11	1.08	.281
	F3	0.00	0.03	-0.01	-0.05	.958
	CPM	0.03	0.02	0.11	1.30	.196
	Preschool1	0.24	0.22	0.11	1.10	.275
	Preschool2	-0.48	0.21	-0.21	-2.23	.027

Language Comprehension Scale						
	Constant	79.07	3.56	0.00	22.20	.000
	Gender	0.36	0.64	0.04	0.56	.574
	EDm	0.48	0.17	0.28	2.88	.005
	EDf	-0.04	0.16	-0.02	-0.27	.788
	F1	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.13	.896
	F2	0.03	0.07	0.05	0.46	.643
	F3	0.06	0.12	0.05	0.48	.631
	CPM	0.21	0.08	0.21	2.48	.014
	Preschool1	0.13	0.84	0.01	0.15	.880
	Preschool2	-0.27	0.80	-0.03	-0.33	.742
Language Expression Scale						
	Constant	75.88	4.55	0.00	16.67	.000
	Gender	0.66	0.82	0.06	0.80	.422
	EDm	0.52	0.21	0.23	2.45	.016
	EDf	0.31	0.21	0.14	1.51	.134
	F1	-0.03	0.03	-0.08	-0.96	.337
	F2	0.07	0.09	0.08	0.77	.442
	F3	-0.10	0.15	-0.07	-0.67	.507
	CPM	0.26	0.11	0.20	2.44	.016
	Preschool1	0.69	1.08	0.06	0.64	.525
	Preschool2	-0.28	1.03	-0.02	-0.27	.789
Meta-linguistic Awareness Scale						
	Constant	-0.90	4.37	0.00	-0.21	.838
	Gender	0.39	0.79	0.04	0.50	.617
	EDm	0.44	0.21	0.20	2.12	.035
	EDf	-0.01	0.20	-0.01	-0.06	.950
	F1	0.03	0.03	0.09	1.06	.290
	F2	0.03	0.09	0.04	0.39	.694
	F3	0.08	0.15	0.06	0.57	.567
	CPM	0.30	0.10	0.23	2.85	.005
	Preschool1	-1.07	1.04	-0.10	-1.03	.304
	Preschool2	-1.43	0.99	-0.14	-1.45	.149

Table 3: Regression coefficients in predicting four criteria

Note: see Table 2.

On *Storytelling test*, children who attended preschool for five years achieved the lowest scores ($M = 5.98, SD = 1.18$). They were followed by the children who did not attend preschool ($M = 6.22, SD = 0.89$). The highest scores on this test were achieved by children attending preschool for three years ($M = 6.59, SD = 1.00$). Scheffe’s post hoc test showed that only the difference between children who attended preschool for three and five years is statistically significant

($p = .014$), whereas the other two paired comparisons did not yield significant results.

The difference between the observed average score in three groups of children with different duration of preschool enrolment and the estimated differences among the groups (based on the regression coefficients b ; see previous paragraph) points to correlations between duration of preschool enrolment and other predictors (see Table 3). This is why we further took differences among children with different preschool education under scrutiny. We examined how groups of children differ according to parental education, family literacy environment, and intelligence of children.

Table 4 shows average values of predictors in different groups and the statistical significance of the differences between the groups. We can see that the groups differ significantly in mother's education, in reading and conversation at home ($F1$), and in development of academic skills ($F2$), but also differences in other predictors were close to statistical significance. Paired comparisons between groups were evaluated with *Tukey's B test* (among different post hoc tests it is neither especially liberal nor too strict). Statistically significant differences were found only for mother's education: mothers of children who did not attend preschool had statistically significantly lower education level than mothers of children who started to attend preschool at the age of three.

	did not attend preschool ($N = 46$)		attended preschool for three years ($N = 49$)		attended preschool for five years ($N = 52$)		test of equality of groups		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	Wilks' Lambda	F (2, 144)	p
EDm	12.26	2.52	13.76	2.04	13.06	2.32	.935	5.03	.008
EDf	11.89	2.00	12.78	2.64	11.90	2.20	.968	2.38	.096
F1	89.39	17.26	96.59	12.08	90.44	16.32	.959	3.11	.048
F2	34.13	5.86	34.08	5.15	31.33	6.88	.953	3.57	.031
F3	23.93	3.17	25.16	3.29	23.71	4.22	.969	2.32	.102
CPM	19.35	4.48	21.31	4.25	20.40	3.14	.961	2.88	.059

Table 4: Differences between groups of children with different level of preschool education

Note: see Table 2.

Discussion

The findings of our study referring to the positive correlations between parental education and child's language competence are also comparable with the

findings of other studies (e.g., Bornstein & Haynes, 1998; Browne, 1996; Duncan & Magnuson, 2003), suggesting that both maternal and paternal education are important factors in children's language development. Six-year-olds whose mothers had a high level of education achieved higher results on all of the three scales of language development as well as on the *Storytelling test* than children whose mothers had a lower level of education (the correlations are positive and statistically significant – see Table 2). The same goes for the education of fathers, the correlations between paternal education and children's storytelling are even higher. Various researchers (e.g., Bornstein et al., 2003; Hoff, 2003a; Marjanović Umek, Podlesek, & Fekonja, 2005) explain the effect of maternal education on children's language development primarily with the correlation between parental education (especially the education of mothers) and the quality of family environment or the quantity and quality of encouragements that children receive in their family environment for their language development. The results obtained only partially support these findings because they show that maternal education is positively correlated only with one of the factors of family environment, namely with factor 3 *Correct use of language*. More educated mothers reported that they more frequently encourage their children to use language correctly and acquire grammatical rules, use more coordinate and subordinate statements when speaking to their children, they more often explain things their children do not understand, and they consistently answer their children's questions, correct their statements, and encourage them to use the dual and plural numbers, as well as past and future forms, than mothers with lower education. According to a group of researchers (Sénéchal, LeFevre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998), activities included in the third family environment factor, such as learning how to count, write, and read, are primarily formal literacy activities, during which parents and children focus on the characteristics of a written text. Hoff (2003b) established that toddlers that heard more complex and longer statements from their mothers learned new words faster than those that heard shorter and simpler statements. Bohannon and Stanowicz (1988, cited in: Berk, 1997) report that toddlers repeated their parents' statements more frequently when the parents corrected their grammatically incorrect statements. To some extent, the results of this study match Bernstein's findings (1962) who established that mothers with a high level of education used an »elaborated« (or more structured) speech code with their children; the typical characteristics of this code include expanding and complementing children's statements more frequently, as well as constructing grammatically correct statements, answering children's questions, and explaining. Mothers with a high level of education reported that they more frequently use a »highly elaborated« conversational style in verbal interactions with their children. Haden, Ornstein, Eckerman, & Didow (2001) define this style as a conversation in which mothers encourage their children's language development by asking them frequent questions and adding new information to their statements. Other aspects of family environment, connected with joint reading and encouraging children's academic skills did not correlate significantly with maternal education and children's storytelling (see

Table 2). Both mothers with higher and lower educational level reported that they read children's books and magazines with their children, visit the library with them, give them books as gifts, talk with them about the book read, and encourage them to engage in symbolic play with comparable frequency. In addition, mothers with different educational levels teach their children to count, write letters and numbers, and read with comparable frequency. The findings of some other studies differ; certain researchers (e.g., Bornstein et al., 2003; Bradley et al., 2001; Coley, 2002; Hoff, 2003a; Marjanovič Umek et al., 2006; Wray & Medwell, 2002) have established that mothers with a higher level of education more often engage in the process of joint reading and other activities connected with language and early literacy development (e.g., visit the library and attend puppet shows with their children, encourage them to engage in symbolic play, and so on), and that the frequency of joint reading by parents and children significantly and positively correlates with children's language development (e.g., Cairney, 2003; Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Silvén et al., 2003). The findings of our study also show that factor 3 *Correct use of language* positively and statistically significantly correlate with child's language comprehension and meta-linguistic awareness but not with language expression or storytelling. The characteristics of joint reading and conversation between mothers and children are positively and significantly correlated only to the meta-linguistic awareness of 6 years old children. Children whose mothers estimated to frequently engage in joint reading and conversation with children as well as encourage them to correctly use grammatically more complex utterances, achieved a higher level of meta-linguistic awareness than children of mothers who reported to less frequently engage in these activities.

The low and insignificant correlations between certain aspects of family environment quality on one hand and maternal education and child's language comprehension, expression and storytelling on the other hand may result from the fact that all mothers, with both low and high levels of education, evaluated their home environment as supportive and with relatively high estimations with the variability of estimations being small. Sénéchal et al. (1998) believe that reading books and other activities that encourage children's language development represent activities that are highly valued by the majority of parents; therefore, to a great extent, their answers to how often they read to their children may reflect social desires and contribute to unreliable correlations between the frequency of joint reading and children's language competence. On the one hand, the high evaluations of the quality of family environment provided by the mothers in our study may be the result of socially desired answers from mothers that believe that the activities included in the questionnaire are important for the development of children's language; on the other hand, highly educated mothers may also be more critical in evaluating the frequency of a specific activity and thus tend to evaluate a specific activity as frequent less readily than mothers with lower educational level. In order to improve the objective evaluation of encouraging children's language development, some authors have developed different approaches to assess the quality of family environment, e.g. *Home Observation for Measurement of*

the Environment – HOME used to evaluate mother's and child's behaviour in the home setting by external observers (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984); check-lists of children's books with correct and incorrect or fictitious titles and authors, used to evaluate to what extent the parents are familiar with children's books (e.g., Bajc & Marjanovič Umek, 2005; Sénéchal, LeFevre, Hudson, & Lawson, 1996).

The results of our study also suggest that child's intellectual abilities also significantly positively correlate with different aspects of his/her language, namely with language comprehension, expression, meta-linguistic awareness and storytelling ability. Six years old children who achieved higher results on *CPM* also expressed a higher level

of language competence and told stories on higher developmental levels than children who achieved lower results on *CPM*. Parental education, family environment, child's gender and his/her intellectual abilities proved to be statistically important predictors of children's language competence at six years of age. These predictors explain an important share of variance in children's storytelling ability as well as in their achievement on *LCS*, *LES* and *MAS*. While controlling for other predictors, child's intellectual abilities, probably also because of significant correlations with some of the variables, did not proved to be a statistically important predictor of child's storytelling ability.

The duration of child's enrolment into preschool explained only a small and statistically insignificant share of additional variance in children's achievements on *LCS*, *LES* and their storytelling ability, but a statistically significant share of variance in children's achievements on *MAS* was (see Table 3). The obtained result also indicate that child's enrolment into preschool in the first year of life statistically significantly and negatively correlates with child's storytelling and meta-linguistic ability at the age of six, while the correlations with child's language comprehension and expression are not statistically significant. Children who were, prior to entering primary school, included into a preschool institution, without concerning the duration of the enrolment, expressed somewhat higher language comprehension, expression and storytelling ability, than children who did not attend preschool, but the correlations between the variables were low and statistically insignificant.

Conclusions

Children's storytelling was, along with the father's educational level, statistically significantly predicted by the duration of child's enrolment into preschool. Children who attended preschool for three years or did not attend preschool differed statistically significantly in their achievements on *Storytelling test* from the children who attended preschool for five years. Children who attended preschool for three years, prior to entering primary school, told stories on higher developmental levels, followed by children, who did not attend preschool, while children, who attended preschool for five years told stories on the lowest developmental levels.

The differences between the groups of children, who differed in the duration of their enrolment into preschool, may be at least partially explained by the differences in some of the other characteristics of these three groups. The results show that the groups of children who attended preschool for five years, three years or did not attend preschool differed statistically significantly in their mothers' educational level and home environment (frequency of reading and engaging in conversation with children, and developing children's academic skills); while the differences in paternal education and child's intellectual abilities approached significance (see Table 4). Children who entered preschool at the age of three had mothers and fathers with higher educational level, their mothers estimated the home environment as more supportive for child's language development and they also achieved slightly higher results on the nonverbal test of intelligence than the other two groups of children. Paired comparisons between the three groups showed that the mothers of children who did not attend preschool had a statistically significantly lower level of education than mothers of children who attended preschool for three years while all the other paired comparisons were statistically insignificant. The positive effect of preschool on children's storytelling of children who attended preschool for three years prior to entering primary school can be a »result« of a more supportive family environment and somewhat higher intellectual abilities of these children and is not entirely influenced by a more or less effective work of a preschool teacher. Nevertheless the findings of our study, showing that preschool is less successful in supporting the pragmatic ability in the first age period, »demand« a special reflection especially on the quality of the preschool on a process level. The findings of a Slovene study (Marjanovič Umek, Fekonja, & Bajc, eds., 2005), in which the researchers assessed the quality of Slovene preschool on the process level, showed that preschool teachers in the first age groups of children do not always support toddlers' language development on the highest levels of quality, e.g. during joint reading, symbolic play or routines. The authors, similarly to some foreign researchers (e.g. Baldock, 2006; Katz, 1985, in Moyles, 1995), conclude that the behaviour of the preschool teachers can be highly influenced by their implicit theories about child's early development and learning. The implicit theories can influence preschool teachers' behaviours in a way that they less frequently use language in different forms and social contexts, engage in joint reading with children and talk to toddlers about the content of the story, less frequently narrate and explain as well as encourage children to tell stories spontaneously.

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Dr Zdenko Medveš et al.¹

Contribution of vocational education and training to equity and social inclusion

Abstract: Vocational education is considered socially inclusive if it provides actual employability and income above the poverty threshold. In terms of equity the problem arises when differentiation of vocational education matches the hierarchical structure of professions. The article analyses the actual chances that education in Slovenia gives to the disadvantaged social groups, especially those coming from families with lower socially-economic status, those whose mother tongue is other than Slovene, persons with special needs, and women. The changing pattern of enrolment in different types of upper secondary schools in the last few years reveals that the vocational schools have gradually become schools leading to social marginalisation and are therefore losing their attractiveness. But it is impossible to give a complete answer to the question about the level of inequality that the disadvantaged social groups may experience since some crucial data is lacking due to the protection of personal data; the Slovenian legislation is restrictive in their collection. No data is collected which would enable monitoring of the equity of the education system at different levels: at enrolment, during schooling, and at the completion of secondary education. But some findings of the studies conducted on the representative samples show us a displeasing picture. Therefore action has to be taken both at the societal and educational levels: the dialogue between social partners has to be enhanced, higher parity of esteem in upper secondary education achieved and the quality of learning outcomes improved. A variety of contemporary vocational qualifications and also additional alternative learning pathways leading to them have to be developed. In addition, institutional differentiation of vocational education should be replaced with a more unified, but flexibly organised, comprehensive vocational school.

Key words: vocational education, equity, social inclusion

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Views on school equity In modern democratic societies, equity in education is more and more recognised as an essential characteristic of national educational systems. Several views and concepts of equity exist. Traditional understanding of equity has two basic meanings. On one hand it means compliance with legislation, and on another equality. The first condition for educational system to be equitable is that the legislation regulating it is equitable. The second condition is the principle of equal possibilities for education, regardless of social situation, gender, race, nationality, religious beliefs and other differences which are insignificant for education. One of the most common manners of empirical assessment of equal educational possibilities in a given educational system is measuring the degree of correlation between the variables which mark the status of children (gender, parents' education, socio-economic status) and accessibility and success of their schooling at different types of schools and at different levels of the educational system. The higher the correlation, the lower the equity of the educational system, but only if positive correlation is a consequence of differences in educational possibilities, and not of differences in preferences of children and their parents. From that perspective, vocational education seems to be the most inequitable part of educational system, as here the correlation between the mentioned variables is usually much higher than in the system of general education. But in addressing equity in vocational education, two things must be taken into consideration. First, the role that vocational education plays in ensuring equity in educational system as a whole, and second, the degree of equity in vocational education itself. The degree of equity in vocational education itself depends mainly on the successful implementation of various principles of equity ('to everyone according to one's merits', 'to everyo-

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ne according to one's capabilities, 'to everyone according to the results of one's work', etc.) in every particular vocational school and in the whole sub-system of vocational education. These principles are an attempt to concretize the general principle of formal equity, which requires that the same are treated equally and the different differently. Therefore, for example, a teacher has to grade all pupils in a given class who have shown the same knowledge (put in the same effort, etc.) with the same grade. But that would only achieve equity of grading in one class. To ensure it at the level of a vocational school or the whole sub-system of vocational education, all teachers should be using the same criteria for grading. In that sense, the assessment of equity in vocational education is in fact not different from the assessment of equity in general education, only it has to be performed on comparable groups. But in that we can already see the specifics of vocational education. In the context of general education, external differentiation or concentration of less successful children (who are very often the very children coming from socially and culturally underprivileged environments) to separate groups, classes or schools is usually interpreted as unfair, as it selects and separates children according to characteristics on which they very often have no influence, but which are essential for their further schooling and therefore largely for their success in life. Vocational education, on other hand, has to be differentiated by disciplines and branches. In the context of vocational education, differentiation of children and adults by branches and disciplines is understood in the opposite way, i.e. as an element of equity. Therefore vocational education is usually socially inclusive, as it leads to skilled employment. Employment has a key role in preventing social exclusion, and is at the same time one of the essential social foundations of human self-esteem. Therefore vocational education is an important element of the social strategy for achieving higher levels of social equity and social inclusion; but it can only be that if it provides actual employability and income above the poverty threshold (Halliday). From that we can conclude that not all branches and all programmes of vocational education have the same role in preventing social exclusion, although they are socially inclusive as they include a big part of socially less privileged persons. The problem in terms of equity arises especially when differentiation of vocational education is adapted to the hierarchical structure of professions, providing for its social reproduction within a discipline or a branch of education. Also, the mere inclusion in vocational education does not guarantee equity of the whole educational system. Educational achievement of persons from marginalised environments has to be improved through positive discrimination (lower number of pupils in class, better teachers, equipment, etc.) in order to provide quality education for employment, further education and active citizenship. It is therefore also true for vocational education that equity cannot be measured only by equal possibilities, but also by realistic conditions to attain quality education for flexible employment, lifelong learning and development of personal and professional career.

Our study does not address all the above questions, our *key question is*: how high benchmarks, which Slovenia reaches in the field of education, are rea-

ched by less privileged social groups, among which we count groups with lower social status, citizens for whom Slovenian is not their mother tongue, persons with special needs and women. We are interested what are their realistic possibilities within upper secondary education, especially vocational education.

Position of vocational education and training in educational system – the principle of positive discrimination

The system of vocational education has been built on basic premises of positive discrimination and lifelong learning already for a good quarter of century, as the current school paths in vocational education and training have been designed already in 1980s. But these premises were completely set after the reform of Slovenian legislation on schools in 1996, when the principles of positive discrimination and lifelong learning were established also in relation between vocational and general education – gymnasium/grammar school. The principle of *lifelong learning* means abolishing school ždead ends, i.e. the paths that lead nowhere ahead but require returning back. Setting up such educational paths in the system of secondary education now enables advancement in acquiring higher levels of education (from ISCED2 to ISCED3 up to ISCED 5,6) and by that building of professional career without returning back to the beginning of education.

The principle of *positive discrimination* is upgrading of the principle of lifelong learning, and in the educational system it means that for the same level of education (for example ISCED 3 or ISCED 4) and the same profession, two paths of education are laid out: a direct and an indirect. The direct path is shorter by a year or two, but steeper and therefore more difficult and riskier. A good example of direct paths to acquire full upper secondary education in Slovenian system is gymnasium and secondary technical school. The duration of both is 4 years. An indirect path to the same level of education (full secondary) or the same profession (for example at the level of a technician) is longer, and therefore more appropriate for certain parts of population which have difficulties in advancing at school due to any reasons. Indirect route is comprised of several education levels and already after 2 or 3 years of schooling enables acquiring completed education for employment and for further schooling.

It is possible to enrol in lower vocational education with completed 7th grade of 9-year elementary school (or 6th grade of 8-year programme) or with completed elementary school with lower educational standard. There is also a possibility of continuation from a lower to a 3-year vocational education, usually in the second year of schooling in a similar discipline or profession. Lower vocational education enables that participants fulfil, in total of two years of education, the key knowledge on the level of compulsory education and are trained for less demanding tasks in the profession, and usually compensate one year in the 3-year vocational education. As also the youth with special needs (including the ones with minor mental disorders) can enrol in lower vocational education,

this form of education in principle also means an instrument of strengthening inclusion.

The system of 3-year vocational education is upgraded with a 2-year vocational-technical education (what is called the 3+2 system), which enables, without returning back to the beginning of education, in total of 5 years, to acquire vocational maturity examination (vocational matura), i.e. the same level of education and profession as obtained in corresponding discipline from 4-year secondary technical education. Consequently, it gives the same rights in employment and in continuation of studies in tertiary education at all higher and high schools (except University study programmes). Taking a 'matura' course, anybody who has completed any vocational or technical school can obtain a general matura and by that a possibility to continue studies at all forms of tertiary education, also at University.

Positive effects of high vertical and horizontal transitivity in secondary education are visible in high benchmarks

For assessment of equity in vocational education, the only important fact is not just formal possibility of vertical transitivity (from lower to higher levels of education) or of horizontal transitivity (from vocational and technical education to general (to matura), and vice versa from general (gymnasium) to vocational and technical education, but also how population is using the possibilities provided by the system in reality. In the real world, unfortunately, not all possibilities of transitivity are equally implemented. The trends in transitivity reflect characteristic Slovenian values in the sphere of education. Two values are especially typical: a) to acquire higher level of education at secondary level, and b) if possible it should be gymnasium / general matura. Firstly, that is visible in aspirations for transition from lower levels and from simpler ancillary professions (ISCED 3C) to more demanding (ISCED 3B). But it is also massively reflected in the wish for transition from standard crafts and industrial professions (ISCED 3B) to professions at the level of a technician, or to what are called the 'service professions' (insurance business, administrative-economics, tourism, health care, childcare workers, etc.) (ISCED 3A). So in the recent years we can notice in our school practices that the great majority of graduates from 3-year vocational education continue schooling at 2-year vocational-technical school which ends with a vocational matura, and that enables them acquiring qualifications for a higher profession in the branch, and opens the path to studying in tertiary education.

Such school organisation of secondary education has no doubt contributed to at least four important achievements, which place Slovenia among the most developed European countries in the field of education.

1. In Slovenia the percentage of population that does not continue schooling after compulsory education is small,
2. a high percentage of population that acquires full secondary education and

- by that obtains possibility to continue studies at tertiary level,
3. a high percentage of adults continue formal education to acquire higher level of education,
 4. slightly above European average is also inclusion in education for population up to 29 years of age.

Ad 1) Benchmark: Until 2010 not more than 10% of population aged 18-24 with completed elementary school or less	
	2006
EU	15,3
Slovenia	5,2
Ad 2) Benchmark: Until 2010 85% of population aged 20-24 with completed higher secondary education	
	2006
EU	77,8 %
Slovenia	89,4 %
Ad 3) Benchmark: Until 2010 at least 12,5% of adults (25-64) participating in education	
	2006
EU	9 %
Slovenia	15 %

Tables 1-3 (Source: All data for year 2006 are extracted from the Commission Staff Working Document *Progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training, Indicators and benchmarks*, 2007)

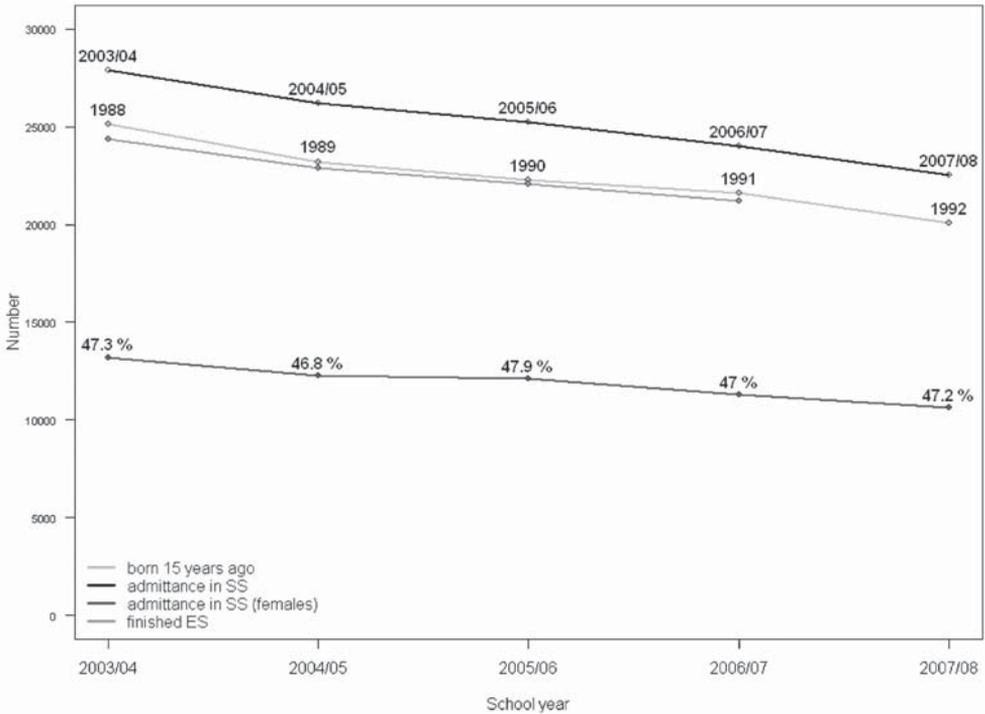
Negative trends in 3-year vocational education

Decrease in national birth-rate 'affects' mainly vocational education The occurrence of high educational aspirations, which is reflected in a high percentage of youth who continue education, is not without negative effects. We will show that on the basis of the following table.

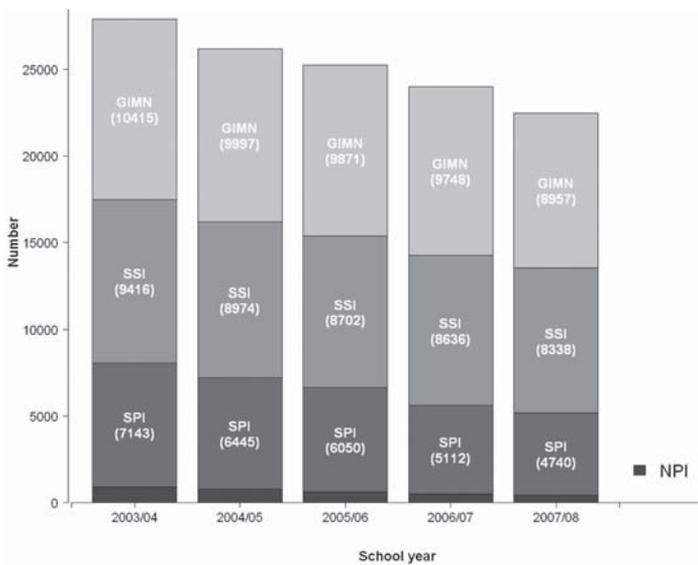
First we would like to point out the background of the presented dynamic of enrolment to secondary schools. A visible decline in enrolment is a consequence of low birth-rate in Slovenia in the past two decades. At the end of 1980s, around 33.000 children were born in Slovenia per year, while in 2006 just above 17.000 were born. The effects of this fall are, in the recent years, visible also in enrolment in secondary education.

The index of total enrolment in all types of secondary schools has, due to lower growth of population, decreased by 20% in the past years. But it is still true that around 98% of generation continues schooling after elementary school in one way or another.

More than dynamics, originating in birth-rate, we are interested in its social dimension. We can see that the decrease in enrolment in secondary schools due to a decrease in birth-rate was almost totally to the detriment of vocational



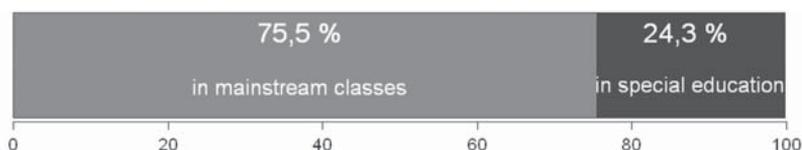
Picture 1: Enrolment in the first year of secondary schools, with regard to the number of births 15 years before, and the number of graduates from elementary school (prepared on the basis of data from the archive of MES – Ministry of Education and Sport)



Picture 2: Dynamics of enrolment in the first year of different types of secondary schools (prepared on the basis of data from the archive of MES)

education (ISCED 3B and 3C), as the absolute number of enrolment in secondary technical schools and in gymnasium (ISCED 3A) remains stable during this time .

We also have to mention enrolment in lower vocational education, which decreased by more than a half. Considering the small number of pupils, this school does not have a real function in the school system any more. Pupils with uncompleted elementary school and with elementary school with lower educational standard are admitted (316 to 445 persons per year are enrolled), so it is more and more becoming a 'special' vocational school. But that is in conflict with principles of integration, on which Slovenian system is based. Namely, integration has been very much strengthened at the level of compulsory education in Slovenia in the recent years.



Picture 3: Percentage of elementary school pupils with special needs, integrated in mainstream classes, and in special education – school year 2007/08 (prepared on the basis of data from Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia – SORS)

An advantage of lower vocational schools are really small learning groups, but on the other hand their main disadvantages are: a) differentiation of educational system already at the age of 15, b) very limited offer of programmes and occupations, especially for girls, and c) very badly developed network of schools offering these programmes. A challenge for the future is to think about integration of lower vocational education into the 3-year education. At least two important details show that such integration could be successful:

- In yearly reports on general and vocational matura we can see that matura exam is successfully passed by 350 persons with special needs every year (which is only 100 less than the number of those enrolled in lower vocational education in 2007/08) which are educated in integrated form, which points to the fact that our secondary-school teachers can offer suitable help and support to their education in inclusive forms,
- Every year more than half of pupils, after completed lower secondary school, continue schooling at secondary vocational or technical school.

A decrease in interest for vocational education is a form of escape from social marginalisation and exclusion

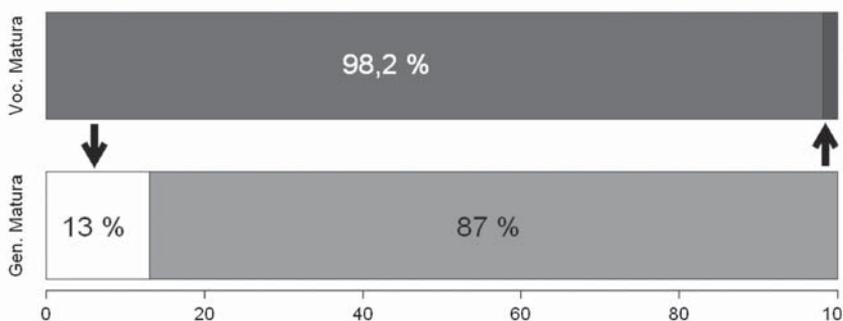
Critical is especially the trend that, in the past five years, enrolment in 3-year vocational education has almost halved (index 66, for girls 58). That is a bigger problem, as 3-year vocational education is mass education in terms of societal needs and vocational profiles, because all professions on the level ISCED

3B are educated here. We would therefore expect that this would be a mass secondary school, but the trends of enrolment in the past years show that this school is quickly losing attractiveness. But not only lower enrolment, an important fact is also the escape of graduates' from 3B to education at level 3A. On the basis of reports on vocational matura we are assessing that a great majority of graduates from 3-year vocational school continue education in vocational-technical school until acquiring a vocational matura, which opens the door to tertiary education, and at the same time means 'leaving' the wide vocational profile (ISCED 3B) and obtaining a profession at the level of a technician (ISCED 3A). In 2006, vocational matura exam was taken by 5.700 candidates (which is 33% of all vocational graduates in a given year), which have first completed 3-year vocational education and then continued at vocational-technical education (system 3+2). If we compare this percentage with enrolment in 3-year vocational education five years ago, it means around 80% of everybody who enrolled in secondary vocational school at that time. We are not claiming that the connection is causal, as detailed and precise data about transition of generation from 3-year vocational school to further education is not available; we can only assess that in a generation of youth in Slovenia only 25% of generation remained at level ISCED 3C and 3B. When assessing transitivity in the system of Slovenian vocational education, we must also consider transitivity between general and vocational education. Also here we can notice very obvious trends. Transitivity from gymnasium to vocational education is organised by vocational training, which is financed by the state for gymnasium graduates. Around 1,7% gymnasium pupils per year enrol in vocational training, the duration of which is maximum one year. The reason for such low percentage is no doubt in low valuation of vocational education, although it is true that also offer for such additional education for gymnasium pupils is relatively poor. Slovenia has not followed the example of numerous other European countries, which have, with expansion of enrolment in gymnasium, also expand offer of vocational education after completed gymnasium. So far only rare professions at level 3A enable that: economic-administrative technician, childcare worker in kindergartens and branches of catering industry, tourism and computing, which are full-numbered in regular education anyway (for example: among vocational graduates, around 45% are economic-administrative technicians). The reason for small possibilities of additional education for gymnasium pupils is mainly the system of one year training, which is, in opinion of the majority of branches-in-excess-demand, too short to be able to acquire vocational qualifications required by the labour market. School policy in the past years has listened to the argument of the branches and has according to new VET law prolonged the vocational training for half a year.

Is in the background of high educational aspirations high valuation of education, or fear of social marginalisation?

The question of course is, whether this prolongation of vocational training would increase attractiveness of education of gymnasium pupils in vocational

sector. In answering that, we have to immerse in the background of the high educational aspirations in Slovenian population, and face the values which stimulate them. Values are an important factor in decisions of population for a particular type of school. If we look at the opposite transition, the transition from vocational schooling to general gymnasium and general matura, we find a completely different picture from the one shown in transition of gymnasium pupils to vocational educational sector. Transition from vocational sector to general matura is, in Slovenian school system, organised via a one-year matura course. This is also an organised form, financed by the state: around 7% of graduates come to general matura exam from this programme every year. In addition, vocational graduates can, on their own initiative, take an additional matura exam in one subject of general matura after they have completed vocational matura, and by that place themselves almost on the same level in the rights to continue studies at tertiary level, because they can also continue studies in university programmes (except for medicine, law and pedagogical and some humanistic studies) which are otherwise not available to vocational graduates. This percentage is around 6% per year. In total, 13% of general matura graduates therefore transit from vocational education to general matura, while in the opposite direction, from gymnasium to vocational matura, the percentage is only 1,7%.



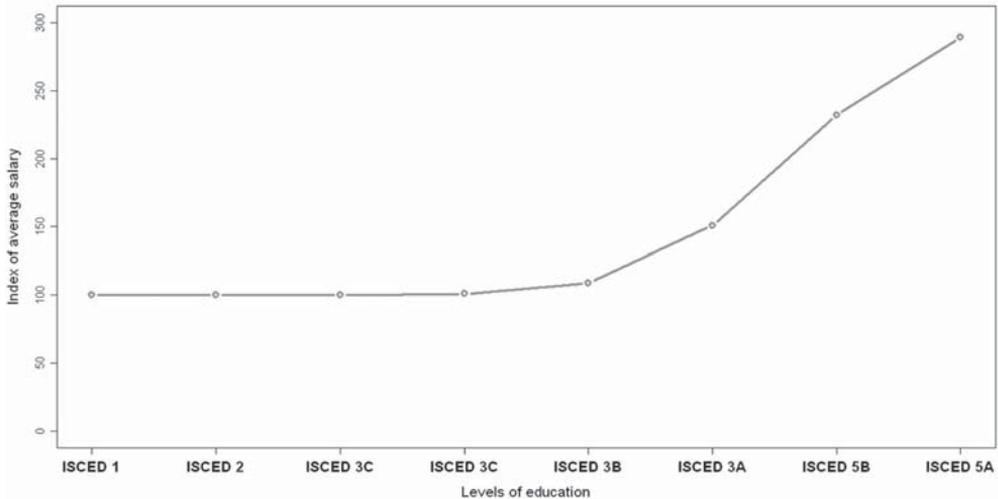
Picture 4: Transition from vocational branches to general matura and vice versa, from gymnasium to vocational education (prepared on the basis of reports on general and vocational matura for 2006)

This undoubtedly points to the prevalent Slovenian value regarding secondary education: *to acquire full secondary education at level ISCED 3A, if possible at gymnasium, and have all possibilities open for continuation of studies at tertiary level.*

Estimates also show that more than 91% of vocational graduates want to continue studies at tertiary level.

In the background of this valuation is social climate which has been present for a longer period, also from the 'socialist times', when some kind of negative discourse started in valuation of crafts and industrial professions, and on the other hand the social significance and prestige of bureaucracy was strengthened.

This is also reflected in low valuation of the work of professions at level ISCED 3C and unfortunately also ISCED 3B, presented by 3-year vocational education, which can be seen in collective employment contracts and in the whole wage system of public and private sector. But in contrast, the same professions are well-paid and have relatively good reputation as private entrepreneurs.

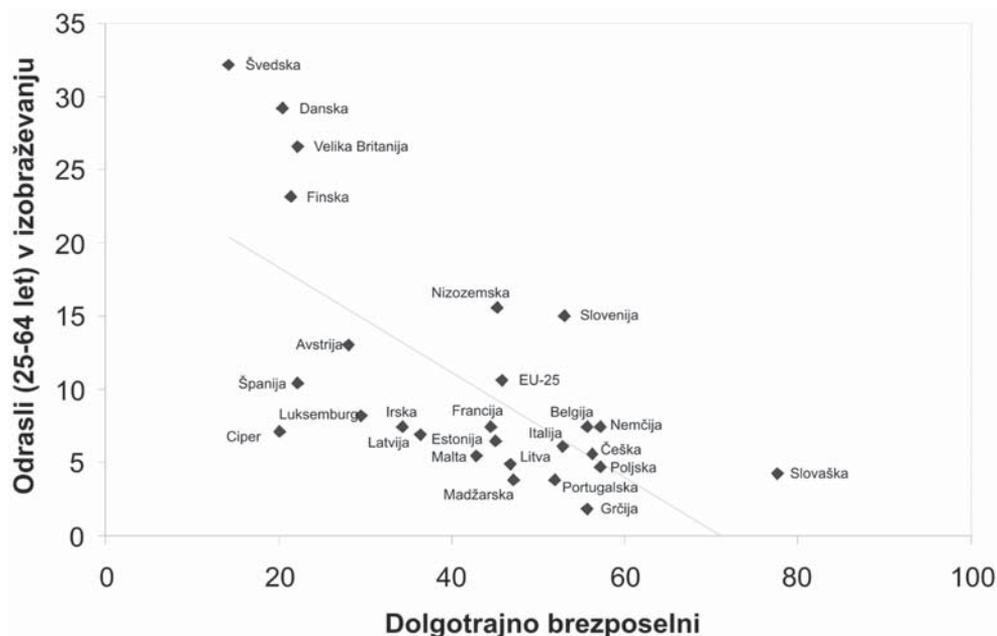


Picture 5: Chain indices of average salaries of employees employed with private individuals and legal entities, per levels of school education (Source: prepared on the basis of data from the SURS 2005)

From the table, progressive correlation between the level of education and average salary is visible. Between the levels 3C and 3B on one side, and 3A on the other side is a clearly visible hierarchy, and also population understands levels in such hierarchical way. A levelling of wages is visible all the way to ISCED 3B level included, and here is the biggest 'leap' of average salaries, exactly between ISCED 3B and 3A, and of course further to 5B and 5A. The shown wage ratios can have important contribution to the explanation of educational aspirations of Slovenian population.

But it is not only the salary what generates high educational aspirations. Many traditional elements of valuating professions join it. Hierarchical ratio between professions at level 3C and B and professions at level 3A leads to the fact that professions below level ISCED 3A are still marked as predominantly manual, work in them is more dependent on external control and is routine, less creative (except in the form of private entrepreneurship); for these professions there is also not much possibility of promotion and development of professional career. All this, coupled with low wages, is diminishing their reputation in society. It is obvious that these valuation orientations have set up among population a system of educational values, in which education at level ISCED 3C and 3B is linked to an image of danger of general social marginalisation, which

is for an individual even more critical than safe employment. Namely, the fact is that education still has a high level of formal value in the system of wages (collective or tariff agreements). The system of salaries is still more dependent on the level of education than on work performance and other factors. Also data about unemployment does not have real motivational effects on the choice of school, as majority of regions, except the most developed central Slovenian region, mainly require ancillary workers and workers without profession. Until 2003, the most employable persons among the unemployed were persons at level ISCED 3 C and B, while after 2004 also persons with level ISCED 3A were more easily employable. So we can understand the trend that youth and adults decide for education leading to professions and the level of education, for which higher income and reputation is ensured, and also for professions (economic administrative area) in which the risk of unemployment is relatively high. But on the other hand, as much as 40% of youth up to the age of 30 say that they would accept work with lower position and salary than appertains to the level of education which they acquired (Slovenian Public Opinion – SJM, 2004). In practice, people with acquired level of education 5B and 5A are very often employed for work, for which level 3A is required. Weak correlation is for Slovenia shown also between the indexes 'participation in education' and 'long-term unemployment', which again points to the fact that Slovenian citizens participate in education more because of high valuation of knowledge and education than for pragmatic reasons, such as for example employment.



Picture 6: Correlation of percentage of adults (25-64 years) in education and training with percentage of long-term unemployed in the total number of unemployed (Source: SURS 2007)

To social marginalization and exclusion leads also differentiation of vocational education

Differentiation in educational system is potentially leading to social exclusion

Any external differentiation in educational system is potentially leading to segregation and diminishes its equity. The same is with differentiation of vocational school types, which youth choose after completed compulsory education, at the age of 15. In that year they have to choose one of the four types of education which are available: lower vocational, 3-year vocational, 4-year secondary technical education and gymnasium (grammar school). To diminish discrimination effects of this differentiation, we have developed numerous paths in Slovenian system to bridge enclosedness of schools, for vertical and horizontal transitivity without returning to the starting year. All this was described in detail in previous section, positive and negative consequences were shown.

Now we cannot avoid the finding that negative effects of differentiated system of vocational education have been strengthening in the past years, which was stimulated on one hand by the shock in birth-rate and on other hand by political and economic transition. With implementation of market economy, relationships at the labour market were also changing. Transition from the former full or fictive employment to real employment caused a surplus of labour force, and also structural unsuitability of the employed. Requirements for some professions are decreasing, especially where whole branches of economic activity were reduced or they even disappeared. Consequently, in the transition period enrolment in certain vocational schools was strongly reduced (textile industry) and some were abolished (mining, leather, furrier's trade). We can understand that the problem of differentiation of secondary schools (vocational, technical schools and gymnasium) is aggravated by the already described orientation in values of Slovenian population with regard to choice of school, as certain forms of education (lower and secondary vocational) simply don't fulfil their expectations.

The best elementary school pupils enrol in gymnasium

With regard to the low valuation of certain vocational levels we can conclude that the choice of secondary school is based on negative selection. Lower vocational schools are chosen by pupils with lower study performance and with lower social indicators, possibly to a greater extent even citizens whose mother tongue is not Slovenian, and persons with lower study capacity.

School year	3-year vocational schools	4-year technical schools	gymnasiums
2007/08	117 to 135	116 to 149	137 to 180
2005/06	25 to 31	61 to 79.5	83 to 113

Table 4: The span in the minimum number of points in study achievements (study results and other achievements) for enrolment in particular school, in case of limited admittance (Source: Archive of MES)

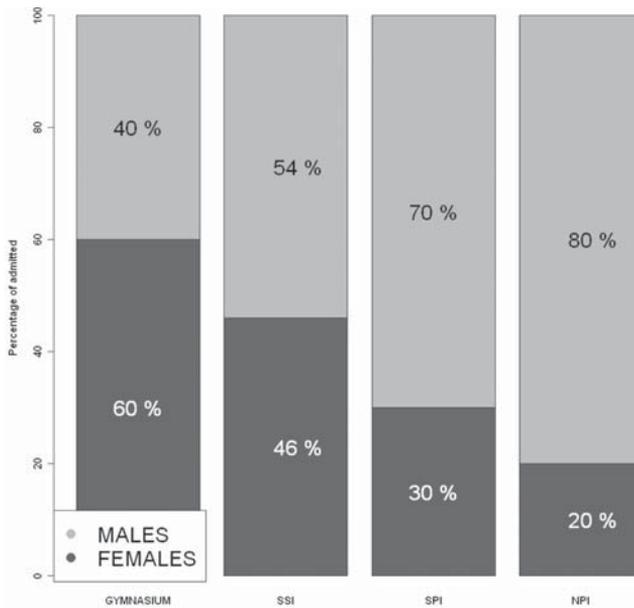
For lower vocational schools, admittance has never been limited. Difference between years is a consequence of change in criteria for choice. The span in the picture illustrates 'negative selection' in enrolment from elementary to secondary schools. Pupils with lowest school results come to lower vocational and to 3-year vocational schools, which is reinforcing the differences in quality among schools, as well as social, economic homogenisation, because in Slovenia we also have positive correlation between success at school and socio-economic cultural factors. Data is also pointing to a certain paradox. In 2007/08 it was more difficult to be admitted to a secondary vocational school with limited admittance than to a secondary technical school or even to a gymnasium, which had not limited admittance. It is especially difficult to explain the trends in changing criteria for choice, as we come across another paradox: in 2007/08 interest for 3-year vocational and technical education is much smaller than in the previous years, but some schools still had to limit admittance (medical assistants, hairdressers, mehatronic).

Type of school/ year	2000/01	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Gymnasiums	37	39	34	28	25	30	10
Secondary technical schools	27	30	24	17	25	34	29
Secondary vocational schools	6	8	8	7	5	4	2

Table 5: Dynamics in the number of secondary schools which have limited admittance

In recent years we are noticing an increase in capacity (seats) at gymnasiums, so the number of gymnasiums that are limiting admittance is falling. But at the same time, there is an increase in the number of technical schools with limited admittance, particularly for professions where mainly women apply: computing, pre-school education, veterinary medicine, tourism, media, health care, design, cosmetics, pharmacy, dentistry. The admittance policy is therefore 'forcing' women to go to gymnasium, which is unfavourable especially for girls with lower study results or with wishes for a profession.

Women are privileged in secondary education, but their weakest element does not have a suitable offer in vocational education The position of women in secondary education is contradictory. On one side, women are prevalent in gymnasium, as the elite form of secondary education. In average they achieve better results than men, and by that they also have advantage in enrolling in tertiary education at the most desired fields of study, where there aren't enough places at faculties for everybody who wants to enrol (medicine, architecture, pharmacy, biotechnology, economics, some social sciences, some languages).



Picture 7: Dynamics of enrolment of girls in various types of secondary schools (data from archive of MES) (in the legend, NPI is missing, which is barely visible in the picture)

At gymnasium, the percentage of females is high above the average of their enrolment in secondary schools. The trend also shows that the percentage of females enrolling in gymnasium has been increasing in the past 5 years, the same as in 4-year technical schools (ISCED 3A) which lead to vocational matura; and in the same period it was falling in 3-year vocational education (ISCED 3B), where this year only 13% of women enrolled, and is half the size of enrolment in year 2003. These trends of 'escape' of novices from vocational educational sector to gymnasium is, coupled with the shock in birth-rates, very explicitly visible particularly for females. Only 93 women enrolled in the first year of lower vocational school this year, while 1419 enrolled in the first year of 3-year vocational education, out of the total number of 10.636.

This shows that there is no suitable programme offer for women at the level of lower vocational education. 17 programmes of lower vocational education exist, which are not all offered, and they are not equally available throughout the country. In 2007/08, girls enrolled only in three programmes in relevant numbers: house assistant (32 girls enrolled = 78%), assistant tailor (6 = 100%), assistant baker (43 = 60%). An additional problem is limitation of admittance to secondary technical programmes, which would attract young girls: computing, economics and administration, health care and medical care, cosmetics, pharmacy, dentistry, media, tourism, pre-school care, hairdressing, trade, cookery. Instead, females prefer to enrol in gymnasium. It is not due to prejudice about what are referred to as 'female' and 'male' professions, but because other profes-

sions are not attractive among youth anyway. That is especially understandable if we establish that with limited admittance to secondary technical schools, higher results have to be acquired at compulsory education (higher number of points) than to enrol in gymnasium which does not have limited admittance. With expansion of admittance to gymnasium, the government policy in the past years 'succumbed' to public opinion and educational values of population, which means that today there is probably no policy that would dare to change this ratio between gymnasium and technical school using limitations and repressive means. But everything else would require substantial changes in conditions which have led, in society – especially in economy and public services – in employment and valuation of work, to the current system of valuation of education among population.

To sum up the view on equity of vocational education in relation to women, it is shown that women are actually privileged in the current Slovenian school arrangement, as they achieve higher results with responsibility for work and learning, and by that the doors are more open to them to enter further levels of education. But on the other hand, there is obviously no offer in vocational education suitable for them; especially for those who are not very good at theoretical learning.

Discriminatory effects of economic, social and cultural factors

As the fundamental dilemma we have mentioned that the posed question cannot be analysed on the whole population, as we simply don't have adequate data for that. On the example of the project PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), to which Slovenia was for the first time included in 2006, we get very interesting explanations of some questions. First, the citizens of Slovenia have accepted the news about achievements of our 15-year olds with pride. In the joint assessment of literacy in natural sciences, which was the central subject of measuring achievements in 2006, they achieved 12th place among 57 countries. Our 15-year olds were, as a rule, chosen from the 1st year of secondary education, so the sample was stratified and it included a proportional number of pupils from lower vocational schools, secondary vocational schools, secondary technical schools and gymnasiums. PISA showed for Slovenia a high level of dispersion (variance) of achievements, which is for Slovenia almost twice as high as the average of OECD, and so Slovenia is allocated to the high third place among the 57 participating countries according to the size of differences among achievements of 15-year olds. The high dispersion of achievements can be, evidently, to the greatest extent attributed to separation of pupils to different types of schools, which is not encouraging from in terms of equity of secondary education though, as it points to an assumption that in deciding for different types of secondary schools, and by that also of vocational schools, there is negative selection, which means that pupils with lower study results enrol in all forms of vocational education 3C and 3B, although of course we must not understand that relation causally. The basic duty and also challenge of any equitable school policy is to provide help for everyone to acquire quality knowledge and highest possible achievements. But

even more than that, we find it essential to stress that the level of school equity is mainly in reducing especially those factors, which reduce individual's success at school, which are not fault of theirs. Such are especially the factors arising from economic, social and cultural environment of an individual. Also from this perspective, PISA is unveiling a painful dimension of 'Slovenian' achievements. A relatively very high share of variance in achievements is, namely, explained exactly with economic, social and cultural background of pupils. In the countries participating in the project PISA 2006, economic-socio-cultural factors should on average explain less than 20% of dispersion of achievements, while in Slovenia the percentage is 46%. Within that, low achievements of immigrants also have strong effect. PISA defines status of an immigrant also for pupils, the parents of which are not born in Slovenia. In Slovenia we have approximately 10% of such 'second generation' immigrants. These pupils have, on average, lower achievements: not even 30% of second-generation immigrant pupils achieve the basic level of literacy in natural sciences, while there is only a bit more than 10% of such 'national' pupils. Besides that, PISA showed that children of immigrants in significantly higher percentage attend lower (3C and 3-year vocational education (3B)) than (3A) secondary technical education and gymnasium. This problem is complementary explained also by the fact that in Slovenia we have relatively high dispersion of achievements also within a particular school, whereby this dispersion is explained with economic-socio-cultural factors only in 0,3%. About other factors that could explain it (differences in abilities, learning capacity, motivation) we can only assume, as there are no data. But even just on the basis of the PISA project results we can form an additional assumption about high socio-cultural heterogeneity among different types of secondary schools, and about socio-cultural homogeneity within a particular secondary school, which directly speaks of social exclusion. PISA is also showing interdependence between education acquired by parents, and the school chosen by their children. The percentage of children of parents, whether it is the father or the mother, with uncompleted or completed elementary school, is highest in lower vocational school (30-38%) and is linearly decreasing, and in gymnasium amounts to 12-13%, and vice versa, the percentage of children of parents with gymnasium is highest in gymnasiums 36% and is decreasing towards lower vocational school, where it is only 8%. Also on the basis of the survey Slovene Public Opinion 2004, which was conducted on a representative sample, we can establish statistically high important connection between the acquired level of education of parents and children.

Answer to the key question and challenges for the future

How can we ensure that the government policy and its development strategies will be founded on databases and their analyses?

We cannot give a clear answer to the question how the less privileged social groups achieve European benchmarks in education, as there are no adequate

data. Slovenian legislation is restrictive in their collection due to *protection of personal data*. There is no information about candidates, not at enrolment, not during schooling, and not at completion of secondary education (at final examinations, vocational or general matura), which would enable monitoring of efficiency of education with regard to social, cultural, national, regional indicators, which is the basis for assessment of equity of the system. Sample surveys point more to the favour of a conclusion that educational system as a whole, and also vocational education, contribute to marginalisation of social groups, particularly with regard to their different economic, social and cultural situation, and of people with special needs. But due to the fact that there are no appropriate national databases, this conclusion cannot be confirmed on a national level. The key problem is that *in Slovenia, in politics as well as in the educational science, no relevant data is available to develop strategies on the national level to remedy unjustness in educational system. Without appropriate data, it is also not possible to implement the principle that the state is forming and developing its educational strategy on the basis of databases and analyses.*

How can we reduce effects of secondary education on social exclusion, and achieve higher equity in vocational education?

1. By increasing attractiveness of vocational education; modernising Slovenian vocational standards; developing modern professions, more attractive for young people and suitable for their different abilities, and more suitable to modern development of work. A dialogue of traditional partners in vocational education, chambers of commerce, and associations and trade unions has to be developed. Strengthening activity of trade unions in the elements which could significantly contribute to more appropriate valuation of work and professions at lower levels of education (3C, B) with activities for development of modern supply of work, with higher initiative, less hierarchy, less routine work, more independence and more responsibility, higher level of inclusion; in short, for work which requires higher quality of knowledge as opposed to routine.
2. By preparing a more diverse offer in vocational education, especially for girls, by developing alternative forms and paths to acquire vocational and technical education; by achieving higher alternation between work and education, schools and companies, and by putting higher consideration on informal education.
3. By reducing or abolishing the rigid structure of types of vocational and technical schools; by reducing institutionalisation or removing some current forms of differentiation in technical and vocational education; by studying the possibility to form, for a certain branch, a *model of joint 3-year vocational and technical school, increase selectivity of study subjects, by connecting current activities for renovation of programmes also with planning* of well-structured educational standards which enable entrance to employment with regard to how demanding professions are and what the

capacities of population are, and to *ensure, on the principles of integration, appropriate learning help to persons with lower learning capacity and persons with special needs.*

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Polona Kelava

Vocational socialisation and the legitimacy of educating in vocational training

Abstract: This paper intends to discuss the relationship between educating and socialisation, as well as the relationship between vocational educating and vocational socialisation. The focus is on the definitions of the two notions, more specifically, it will be discussed whether there is a clear distinction between the two terms, especially from the perspective of the intentionality of the process in order to clarify the application of the terms in practice. An example is provided to show that socialisation aims in vocational training often include educational (vocational) aims. The example is further discussed in relation to vocational ethics, which allows for the legitimisation of (vocational) educating.

Key words: educating, vocational educating, education, vocational education, socialisation, vocational socialisation, vocational ethics, legitimacy of (vocational) educating

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Introduction

According to E. Hughes, founder of sociology of work, »*Division of labour*, being one of the most fundamental of all social processes, finds one of its most explicit expressions in occupations.« (1994:23). However, he adds that from the perspective of sociology, it is only a coincidence that the distribution of labour appears to be technical (ibid. 24)¹. This basic definition and its implications (cf. Hughes, 1994:19-88) point to the significance of occupations for society, and also the consequence for its individual members. If a specific occupation represents one of the key components of an individual's life, and vocational identity represents one of the key components of an individual's identity (cf. Muršak, 1991, 1993, 1994), then it is necessary to dedicate special care to the preparation for future occupation.

Modern systems of education and (practical) training are predominantly oriented towards a rather accurate preparation for specific occupations (whether it includes alternations or not), in order to enable the individual an easier and better placement in *society* during his or her transition to working life. This goes beyond mere education, teaching and learning, or the transfer of knowledge. It also presupposes the acquisition of certain working and social competencies that are more or less directly related to work (a specific occupation), where *educating* is understood to be an integral part. These systems should thus include *educational* preparation for a specific occupation. Where can socialisation, vocational socialisation and vocational educating be placed? The question is, whether this is in accordance with the anticipated historical disappearing (denying) of 'educating', or rather, how does this relate to its legitimacy.

Are we witnessing avoidance, or evasion of the use of the word educating, not only in vocational training, but also in the entire system of education (from upper secondary level onwards)? Among the declared aims of educating, sociali-

¹ Cf. Kavčič, 1987.

sation aims are expressed while educational² aims are not. To ask ourselves why this is so, we must first define the following notions – educating, socialisation, vocational educating and vocational socialisation. We immediately come across the (non-)intentionality of educating and socialisation. In certain definitions it clarifies the distinction between the meanings of the two terms; in other definitions the terms coincide in this point.

Educating and Socialisation

Although there are differences in how the more notable authors define the relationship between educating and socialisation, the majority see educating as an intentional process. Let us mention a few examples. »The term *educating* denotes the planned activity of parents and teachers with the intention of influencing a child or young person in their development, where they may acquire a certain manner of behaviour which is necessary in order to perform various social functions and for the normal integration into social groups and the social community on a whole. With *educating*, established customs, habits and moral standards are transferred to young generations. Educating is an element of culture and is directly linked to education, teaching and learning.« (Bosanac, Mandić and Petković, 1977, p.410) The listed authors of *The glossary of sociology and social psychology* connect educating with formal instruction and unconditionally assign it intentional. Similarly, other authors, who understand educating as an integral part of socialisation, recognise the power and intention of educating. Durkheim (1981:42) defines educating as »systematic socialisation of the young generation«. Therefore in this sense, Durkheim emphasises that the aim of educating is to form or build a social being. From his subsequent discussion – that the task of educating is to complement the newly born, egoistic and asocial being with another being, who is capable of a moral and social life; and that educating allows for the transfer of very complex and diverse abilities that social life requires (ibid., 43-47) – the power Durkheim ascribes to educating is evident.

Bosanac, Mandić and Petković also define the relationship between educating and socialisation. »As opposed to socialisation (which is a broader notion and includes all social factors that form a personality), educating involves an institutionalised, more or less planned and systematic influence of the family and specialised institutions (kindergarten, school and other educational and cultural establishments), which leads to the acquisition of habits, manners of behaviour, internalisation of criteria, and, above all offers knowledge in an organised way.« (1977:410)

Even the following definition of educating as »a process of conscious transference of culture, in particular from older to younger generations« (Sociološki ... :728) does not concede non-intentionality within it.

² Cf. Katalog znanj..., 2004 and Programi ... 2008. (More on the issue later.)

Educating is therefore only intentional. It is a planned process of the formation of an individual in accordance with certain values and it occurs as a result of our activity, which is meant to »cultivate« certain values and supposedly takes place by following a certain value. The value »guides«, or directs educating'.³

(cf. also Medveš, 2000:187, 188.)

What can be said about intentionality or non-intentionality of socialisation, and consequently its relation to educating? As will be revealed, many authors attribute non-intentionality to socialisation, while at the same time they interpret other processes (most often educating) as its integral part, and these are (or can also be) intentional. This is a contradiction, as within something that is spontaneous, there is no place for »intentional«, planned elements, despite the fact that they may lead towards the same aims. Turning to how major authors define socialisation and its relation to educating, the topic of socialisation can be approached.

Socialisation is primarily the field of study of social psychology, sociology, sociology of knowledge, pedagogic sociology and other related sciences. As there are substantially less cases where we can find support for (exclusive) non-intentionality of socialisation and consequently for socialisation as a process parallel (and not subordinate or superior) to educating, in comparison to intentionality of educating, a few examples of the former interpretation of the relationship between educating and socialisation shall be examined.

According to *The glossary of sociology and social psychology*, socialisation is the process of the transformation of the biological individual into a social person. Therefore, »a group of organised and unorganised influences, a continuity of processes, the integrity of social interaction that causes the formation of such a personality that answers the needs of a specific type of society«⁴ (Bosanać, Mandić and Petković, 1977:591-592). In its⁵ analysis »organised« as well as »unorganised« »influences« are even more clearly included into socialisation.

Sociology of knowledge also places educating within socialisation, which should therefore be a »many-sided and consistent initiation of the individual

³ It is important to note that we do *not* (at this point) discuss the effect of educating in accordance to (our) action or a certain value.

⁴ The definition in the glossary is a contribution by V. Milanović.

⁵ »Socialisation is thus a process of the formation of social motivation in the behaviour of the individual system of the subject. The process of socialisation is not programmed biologically, on the contrary it represents a functional reprogramming of bio-physiological potentials (...) with the content of social interaction and the social system, therefore the process of socialisation parallels the development of bio-physiological potentials. The process of socialisation is carried out through the learning process, more specifically through two basic modalities: a) on the basis of the subject's own activity and acquisition of experience through interaction with the environment in the context of the fulfilment of his or her needs and desires, and more generally through practice, b) on the basis of organised influences performed by society (family, social group, the state) through educating, school, ideology and value system. Socialisation is a very general process that involves various specific components, which can be interpreted as special processes. These are primarily internalisation, or introjections, educating, (learning/instruction) and acculturation.« (Bosanać, Mandić and Petković, 1977:591-592)

into the objective social world or into one of its spheres« (Berger and Luckmann, 1988:122). Bergant also derives from this social science and relates to it with the formulation that *socialisation* is »a process, in which a young (human) being from the early days of their life is introduced into a certain social group, through which he or she acquires the culture (manner of thinking, speech, manner of interpersonal communication, knowledge, beliefs, feeling, values, use of material goods, working areas etc.) that belongs to the group and which is usually part of a wider cultural environment. Through the process of socialisation, the child becomes part of the social and cultural environment in which they were born and which surrounds them.« (Bergant, 1994:16) It is clear that such an interpretation also includes the »intentional part of socialisation« – which is *educating*. Similarly, the general sociological definition of socialisation as a »process in which a dependent child gradually becomes self-aware, educated and is introduced into the culture in which they are born« (Giddens, 2000:25), presupposes the same. This is followed by the formulation that socialisation in its most general meaning »involves the transcendence of the separation of a phenomenon from other elements and the social entity. ... In this sense what is understood under the term socialisation is primarily the socialisation of the individual ..., their placement in society and culture, as well as their becoming 'a personality'« (Sociolški ..., 454). The same source (ibid.,728) also refers to educating as part of socialisation.

Among the sciences, social psychology probably deals with the problems of socialisation most thoroughly, as it positions social learning and socialisation as one of its central objects of research (cf. Rot, 1968 and 1983), thus it is also of interest how it defines socialisation⁶.

Havenka (1968:81), for example, defines the process of *socialisation* as »the development of a personality that is actualised through the process of learning«, as well as emphasising the restricted meaning of the term *socialisation of personality*, which refers to the learning of such behaviour that is desirable, acceptable and valued in a specific society. In this case, the notion of *socialisation of personality* appears to coincide with the notion of *educating* (ibid.). Simultaneously, the same author (ibid.,110) states that the term »*socialisation of personality*« refers to the forms and contents of social influence in the process of the formation of identity, as well as the fact that human generation necessarily and naturally evolve in society«. Thus, the author allows for elements of educating or intentionality within socialisation. His equating of intentionality and non-intentionality at a certain point and in a certain field of their activity does not take into account the possibility of educating and socialisation as being two separate processes, which in this concrete example, strive towards the fulfilment of the same or familiar values. This point later will be returned to.

The presented definitions allow for non-intentionality of socialisation as well as for intentionality of educating, however, they are not exclusive.⁷ We can sum

⁶ Cf. also Urh, 2001:24-32.

⁷ Similarly A. Gutmann (2001), in relation to democratic educating, believes that at least a part of socialisation is intentional e.g. in connection to the issue he speaks about »wrong manners of so-

up that most authors allow for intentionality as well as non-intentionality within socialisation, however, we have already assumed that such a view does not hold.

Haralambos and Holborn (2001) provide a more neutral definition. »In a group of peers an inexperienced child learns, through the interaction with others and through children's games, how to adapt to accepted manners of behaviour in a group and to observe the fact that social life is based on rules.« (ibid., 12) However, the authors do not define the relation of socialisation to educating.

In all the above definitions a fact has to be pointed out – all definitions attribute non-intentionality to socialisation relatively – except in the case when we wish to establish socialisation intentionally, in accordance with a certain purpose or value. Thus, they place within an unintentional process a point of intentionality (-educating), which is contradictory and thus unacceptable. (cf. also Medveš, 2000)

As the above definitions indicate, at least to a certain extent, we can conclude that socialisation and educating are two *parallel* processes, which can otherwise lead to the same goals (and are probably more effective in this case)⁸. However, they are distinctive in one feature – intentionality. If educating is intentional and guided by certain values and thus defined in relation to ethics, it follows that socialisation, as a process taking place among individuals (peers) spontaneously at each moment of contact, is an unintentional process, which is impossible to control (guide).

Vocational Socialisation – Vocational Educating – Vocational Ethics

Approaching the core of the subject, the focus of interest can be placed on the parallels between the above statements and vocational socialisation and educating. A clear definition of *vocational educating shall also be given*. In the practice of vocational and professional training, the term vocational educating is no longer used.

Let us examine the following example – in our catalogues of knowledge standards for subjects that are taught in the programmes of vocational training (these are programmes that are still performed but are gradually being phased out), the listed educational (vocational) aims are not expressed, while the aims of vocational socialisation are.

Let us take a look at *socialisation aims* (according to the corresponding informational aims) within the operational aims of the subject »engineering« in the programmes of secondary vocational education for the following occupations – sign painter, chimney sweep, construction worker specialised in dry-fitting, stonemason, (brick)kiln manufacturer, house painter, mechanical engineer, carpenter and bricklayer.

cialisation« that parents may choose for their children. Such a definition goes along with those that were already mentioned.

⁸ Or less effective when guided by different or even contradictory values.

Socialisation aims of the subject »engineering«, among other things, determine that a student or apprentice should: develop a positive attitude towards the profession, ... , form his or her interests and standpoint in any specific area of vocation, ..., become aware of the professional co-responsibility in the engineering business, especially in planning construction objects, recognise the necessity for an organisational hierarchy and the connection between all co-workers, ..., develop personal as well as professional responsibility, ..., develop ecological awareness, ..., develop an awareness of personal professional and moral responsibility, ..., develop a positive attitude towards cultural heritage, (Katalog, 2004)

In newer catalogues of knowledge standards, for the school year 2008/09, socialisation aims, as a special category within operational aims, are left out. However, they are presented in the directional aims of the module.⁹

In individual socialisation aims, we can easily recognise the demand for intentional and planned educational activity in accordance to specific (vocational) values. Why can it be seen, on the higher secondary stage of education, an evasion/avoidance of educational aims, or rather the aims of vocational educating despite the obvious contradiction?

On the other hand, Muršak already posed the question of the justification for planned adaptation of the individual with regards to the demands of professional work during their preparation for it as well as during their later professional activity (1991:389)¹⁰.

Yet, this is how we act – it is expressed in the catalogues of knowledge standards, while the true nature of these aims remains concealed. At the higher secondary stage of education, obvious educational aims are attempted to be hidden. This includes specific (vocational) values as well, as the concealment of the term socialisation and the avoidance of using the term educating. Is educating (at this stage of schooling) not legitimate any more? Why is this not expressed in official documents, even when the educational element is evident?

Let us begin with the definition of the origin and development of *vocational identity*, which is the basic result of vocational socialisation, where the process is twofold. »On the one hand, planned vocational activity takes place, which through the processes of vocational educating tries to produce such effects of vocational socialisation, which would as best as possible suit the vocation or type of individual with a certain occupation; and the task of education and training is to prepare the individual for it. On the other hand, vocational socialisation takes place. This is not planned and thus relates to a 'spontaneous' development of vocational identity. The two processes together constitute vocational socialisation as a whole, ...« (Muršak, 1991:395)

⁹ Cf. also Programi ..., 2008.

¹⁰ This contradiction is not going to be discussed more in detail here. And again, the objecting to the *justification for planned adaptation of the individual with regards to the demands of professional work* would not be approached through denying of the necessity of educating and vocational educating. But the awareness of this dimension and the extent of the problems of vocational identity as a whole should be noticed.

*Vocational educating*¹¹ according to Muršak, »is a process of intentional and systematic development of qualities that are characteristic of a certain vocation, and simultaneously conscious and intentional influences on the formation of vocational identity, or rather, on the course of the processes of vocational socialisation – at school or workplace, at practical training during the working process, or during working practice. The term 'planned' or 'guided' vocational socialisation can also be used« (2002:84), and we can observe that just the same as with *socialisation*, the non-intentionality of *vocational socialisation* is inconsistent. However, it also becomes clear that intentionality, or an outline of the aims of educating is acceptable.

If we thus agreed to vocational educating at the higher secondary stage of education, we would contribute to the achievement of the aims of vocational educating, provide a more appropriate output and try to at least partly 'direct' the process of vocational socialisation. This does not theoretically correspond to our former arguments about the delineation of educating and socialisation on the basis of intentionality, however, to deny vocational educating in the (educational) practice of vocational and professional training as existing in the catalogues of knowledge standards for vocational and professional training, is even more questionable.

The same author defines vocational socialisation as »the process of formation of vocational identity, which begins already in the schooling period and continues throughout the individual's career. The attitude towards work and understanding of the self in relation to work is formed and developed in the process.« (Muršak, 2002:83) And further, »In addition to the real situation in the processes of work, the referential community in which the individual works, and where dynamic group relations are formed among the members of the same social group that provides the individual with feedback information about their work and renders possible the processes of interpersonal identification, is of vital importance for the formation of vocational identity.« (ibid.) This definition does not allow for any possibility of vocational socialisation. It is, however, complemented by the definition of socialisation aims (that are as a rule included in vocational socialisation), which encompass »the development of social and cultural standards of vocational activity and communication, as well as procedure standards; the development of vocational or professional identity and responsibility; development of motivation and capacity for team-work, for co-operation and problem-solving, as well as the development of elements of corporate identification and social integration in a company or working community« (ibid., 117). If we were consistent, we would refer to these aims as »educational« and not as »socialisation« aims.

Berger and Luckmann do not actually speak with the intention of defining vocational socialisation. They indeed tackle its components in an interesting

¹¹ The author originally uses the term vocational education, which is also more commonly used. Here is, on the other hand, used the term vocational educating, since this expression is more consistent with the entire text and its argumentation.

way. They first delineate primary from secondary socialisation¹², and further define secondary socialisation as follows, »*Secondary socialisation* is the internalisation of institutionalised žunderworlds', or žunderworlds' based in an institution. Its extent and character are therefore limited with the complexity of the division of labour and accompanying distribution of knowledge.«¹³ (1988:129) This definition undoubtedly relates to elements of vocational socialisation. We similarly recognise a space for educating in the statement that »the fact that secondary socialisation processes do not presuppose a high degree of identification (with others, comm. P. K.) and that its content does not possess the quality of inevitability (as is necessary with primary socialisation, comm. P.K.)« can be »pragmatically useful, as they allow for a rationally and emotionally controlled sequence of learning« (ibid.,134). If we take into account that in complex institutions highly classified systems of secondary socialisation exists, which also presuppose different categories of (corporate) staff (ibid.,136), we know that at least a part of the values, which support and maintain such systems, can be transmitted methodically – through educating; while a part is transmitted through unintentional socialisation. The statement in relation to socialisation that, »it is possible to transform subjective reality« (Berger, Luckmann, 1988:145), allows for the conclusion that it can take place intentionally and/or unintentionally. Haralambos and Holborn (2001:12) interestingly conclude that in western society, »the system of education, working community and peer groups (their members have a similar status and are often of the same age)« (ibid.) are also among the factors affecting *socialisation*. The essence is the transfer of values, which is partly also intentional, where every time the values need to be rethought and re-evaluated¹⁴.

We can affirm with certainty at least that *vocational socialisation* represents a very important part of *socialisation* in general. From what was said to this point beneath this subtitle, it is possible to paraphrase that often sources present elements of intentionality also in vocational socialisation, and that vocational educating as well as its defined goals are often hidden under the notion of »vocational socialisation«.

As has already been indicated, educating and socialisation are two separate notions and processes, which can lead to the same goals, and are in this

¹² »*Primary socialisation* is socialisation, to which the individual is exposed in their childhood, and with the help of which they become part of society. *Secondary socialisation* is then any further process that introduces the already socialised individual into new spheres of the society in which they live.« (Berger and Luckmann, 1988:122)

¹³ It should be added that Berger and Luckmann interpret secondary socialisation as »acquisition of knowledge that derives from specific social roles. These roles are directly or indirectly rooted in the division of labour.« (1988:129) They also add that »secondary socialisation requires the acquisition of vocabulary that derives from specific social roles, which in the first place means the internalisation of meaning that structure established explanations of behaviour within the institutionalised area« (ibid.)

¹⁴ Cf. Haralambos, Holborn, 2001:12. »At the beginning of their professional life a young joiner, teacher or accountant soon learns the rules of the game and skills at their job. If they changed their jobs, they would join another professional group and would have to learn new skills as well as accept different manners of behaviour and clothing.« (cf. also Muršak, 1991:391)

case more effective. A similar conclusion can be applied in the case of vocational educating and vocational socialisation.

Returning to the definition of vocational identity, two key sources of a successful formation of vocational identity (Muršak, 1991), and above all, some major advantages of their uniform operation can be seen. If then the aims of *vocational educating* as well as the *working environment*, with the help of which the individual is *socially initiated* into a specific occupation strive towards the same values, vocational educating and socialisation would be more effective, they would achieve their aims, while the individual will form a positive vocational identity.

Here, we are led to think about *vocational ethics*, which is »ethics that is formed and used in a social group in order to level relationships inside the group and the relationships with other groups. The specific activity and status of a certain vocation represent the basis for vocational ethics. ... Vocational ethics is usually not in contradiction with generally prevailing social ethics; it only specifies its general rules by using them according to the specific relationships in the occupation that it regulates. Vocational ethics usually develops from a distinct awareness of honour because of the association to a certain vocation, which strengthens the sense of belonging.« (Sociološki ..., 1982:500)

If we can not deny the existence of vocational ethics, it is even more difficult to deny vocational educating. If ethics exist, then values also exist. And where there *are* values, it is worth to derive educational aims from them – in the case of vocational ethics these are *aims of vocational educating*, in order to at least neutralise – if not advance – the situation, when spontaneous vocational socialisation is negative (cf. Muršak, 1991:397); or rather to reinforce the effects of positive socialisation with a tendency towards the same positive vocational values.

Legitimacy of 'Educating' in Vocational Training?

»The question of legitimacy (of educating, comm. P. K.) was originally a question of ethic intentionality.« (Medveš, 2000:189) If the question of legitimacy was once asked, as today it is not discussed *at all* in relation to educating as a whole, then even more so it needs to be reconsidered at the secondary stage of education. Our discussion is primarily guided by the fact that educational aims, at this stage, are »masked« into socialisation aims. Why is this so; why do we avoid the term »educating« at this stage? Do we need an »excuse« in order to *educate*?

As a matter of fact, it is »difficult to imagine the connection between pedagogy and ethics ever to be broken« (ibid., 191), which does not mean that certain questions and problems relating to the issue are not posed (Medveš, 2000). These, however, do not indicate a categorical denial or abandoning of educating on the basis of any ethics, nor does it indicate the abandoning of educating for it to be legitimate. As an answer to the absence of values, which today questions the

legitimacy of educating in accordance to ethics¹⁵, Medveš (ibid.) emphasises that educating needs to be developed as a problem of constant public confrontation of the individual with values, and not their rejection.

As the function of vocational training is to prepare the individual for their job (which is in the future going to represent a great and important part of their life, while vocational identity is going to be among the most important components of their identity), it should in this sense comprise of at least a part of vocational educating. The setting of aims/goals of *vocational educating* appears to be reasonable and justifiable, with the intention of achieving vocational socialisation – which already takes place at school or at workplace during practical training – it would be as successful as possible and would contribute to the formation of vocational identity as thoroughly as possible (cf. Muršak, 1991). And if it is legitimate as well (cf. Medveš, 2000. cf. also Pavlović, 2000), and a teacher is »bound to acquaint the children (and pupils, comm. P.K) with values in their educational practice and ... to teach them moral communication« (Medveš, 2000:195), it follows that the acceptance of »non-educating« would be unjustifiable – which also applies for vocational educating, but above all it would be in contradiction to the ethical imperative of a particular vocation.

We cannot, however, avoid the fact that it is a completely different matter of discussion, whether a teacher is going to be successful in »tuning children's moral judgement, emotions, will and behaviour with general principles that the teacher follows« (ibid.). This is the space where *socialisation* as unplanned, unintentional and spontaneous plays a necessary role. This component of influence upon the child or pupil is out of our control; the educational component is therefore so much more at the centre of attention of the system of education. Although it cannot be neglected that the effect of educating cannot be controlled or foretold, we can not reject educating, or substitute it with other terms. If ethics remains the basis of educating, and vocational ethics the basis of vocational educating, and socialisation, which cannot be controlled, affects »the desired result of educating«, we should at least try to move towards such goals of educating and socialisation that would formally correspond. It is necessary to consider whether it is appropriate to substitute *educating* with *socialisation*, and whether this means the evasion of appointing legitimacy to educating.

If educating is thus legitimate, then vocational educating is legitimate as well. If we define vocational educational goals, then we must say that we are

¹⁵ Medveš »questions« the legitimacy of educating in accordance with ethics in the treatise *Legitimacy of education in the public school* (2000) so as to re-establish this relation and justify it under the present circumstances. He asserts that up to the middle 19th and 20th century »ethics was the source on which pedagogy grounded its legitimacy« (ibid., 190). Cultural pedagogy later posed the question of legitimacy of educating on the basis of ethics, in which »there is (always) evidence of social influences, and within them finally also outlines of adherence to particular political doctrines, ...« (ibid.), which can definitely be disputed; (as) it can lead to an oversimplified conclusion of the illegitimacy of educating. Despite the crisis in values disregard for educating or »non-educating« is not acceptable. It would be easier and more justifiable to consider/think about values. This applies to professional education as well.

educating for a vocation. We would thus acknowledge both components of the formation of vocational identity as well as legitimise a planned introduction of vocational ethics into practice through appropriate educational aims.

In vocational and professional training, it therefore is more appropriate to lay greater emphasis and put more energy into the consideration of ethics, values, (vocational) professional ethics and professional (vocational) values.

Regarding the disclosed arguments it is concluded and suggested that relationships between educating and socialisation would be rethought and newly established. The authorisation of this rethinking is based on the legitimacy of (vocational) educating as well as on evident resting of vocational educating on vocational ethics, according to which the catalogues of knowledge standards, other materials and, nevertheless, the attitude of staff, who shape everyday life of vocational education in Slovenia, must be adapted correspondingly.

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Dr Janez Vogrinc

The importance of triangulation for ensuring the quality of scientific findings of the qualitative research

Abstract: In the paper the qualitative research in which the researcher has been directly involved and has himself been examining the research phenomenon in the studied environment is presented. The aim of this qualitative study is to gather data in the form of rich content-based descriptions of people, events, and situations by using different, especially non-structural, techniques, to discover the stakeholders' views and similar, to orally analyze the gathered data, and finally to interpret the findings in the form of a concept or contextually dependent grounded theory. The purpose of the paper is further to analyze the applied criteria to assess the quality of scientific findings established with the qualitative research, especially triangulation, which is a combination of different methods, techniques, data sources, researchers, theories and scientific disciplines within the same research. Triangulation is defined as a strategy to ensure the quality of scientific findings established with the qualitative research.

Key words: qualitative research, triangulation, criteria for defining quality of qualitative research, grounded theory

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Introduction

In the field of humanities and social humanistic sciences, two paradigms of scientific research were developed in the past, i.e. the quantitative and the qualitative one, depending on their attributes. In the paper, the expression »paradigm« is used in the sense of Kuhn´s contemporary definition of the scientific paradigm. According to Kuhn, paradigms are »the series of reciprocally connected assumptions about social phenomena, providing the philosophical and notional frame for studying them« (Kuhn 1974, p. 39). Therefore, the paradigm is the sum of values, convictions, assumptions telling us which values, beliefs, convictions, assumptions, laws etc., regarding the research within the scientific discipline, are shared by the adherents of a certain scientific paradigm. In accordance to them, they form their tradition of scientific research. The criteria for assessing the quality of findings established in the research process should be in line with the paradigm a certain research form is attached to. As another form of scientific research than it is used in the quantitative research is introduced by the epistemological baese of the qualitative research, also the criteria of assessing findings deriving from the qualitative and the quantitative research should be different.

In the paper the focus will be on the qualitative research, the basic characteristics of which as well as the applied criteria for assessing the quality of scientific findings established with it will be analyzed. Special attention will be paid to triangulation. In conclusion triangulation as the criterion of assessing the quality of scientific findings established with the qualitative research will be critically examined as regards its epistemological characteristics; further, triangulation will be justified as a strategy of ensuring the quality of scientific findings established with the qualitative research, and not as one of the specific criteria of assessing the quality of findings established with the qualitative research, as well.

Basic Characteristics of Qualitative Research

The qualitative research regarding its ontological, epistemological and methodological aspect is not a consistent phenomenon; namely, it combines different kinds of research, e.g. a case study, life history, action research and the like. Bogdan and Biklen (2003, p. 2) use the term »qualitative research« as the superordinate concept, joining different research approaches with certain common characteristics as well. With the expression »qualitative research« the research is denoted consisting of the basic empirical material, collected in the research process, which is verbally described or narrated. Furthermore, the collected material is worked on and analyzed in words without numerical operations (Mesec 1998, p. 26). In other authors, (e.g. Denzin and Lincoln 2000, Creswell 1998) similar definitions of the qualitative research are found. According to Creswell, the qualitative research is the research process designed according to a clear methodological tradition of research, whereby researchers build up a complex, holistic framework by analyzing narratives and observations, conducting the research work in the habitat (Creswell 1998, p. 15). Fraenkel and Wallen (2006, p. 430) draw attention to the fact that qualitative researchers mainly focus on the examination of characteristic traits or properties of a certain activity, group, situation, materials, respectively, but they are not much interested in the frequency of appearance of this activity, group, situation, or material. "Qualitative« research is an exploratory approach emphasizing words rather than quantification at gathering and analyzing the data. It is a matter of the inductive, constructivist and interpretative exploratory approach with the following main stresses: to view the world with the eyes of the examinees, to describe and take into account the context, to emphasize the process and not only the final results, to be flexible and develop the concepts and theories as the research process outcomes (Bryman 2004, str. 266)."

To summarize, for the qualitative research it is characteristic that data are gathered more in a verbal and visual than in a numeric form. At analyzing the gathered data statistical procedures are also not used, but predominantly the qualitative analysis, the essence of which is searching for codes in the analyzed materials (Bryman 2004, p. 392). The main part of the qualitative analysis of the material is formed by the coding process namely, i.e. interpreting the analyzed text and attributing the meaning (of key words, notions, codes) to its individual parts (Charmaz 2006, p. 46, Bryman 2004, p. 402, Flick 1998, p. 179), respectively. Qualitative analysis of the material starts with defining the coding units, followed by the appropriate phenomena records according to our judgement and analyzing the characteristics of these phenomena, and ends with the development of the grounded theory.¹ The grounded theory is read out as a nar-

¹ »Utemeljena teorija« is a Slovene translation of the expression "Grounded Theory". In Slovenian professional literature the collocation is translated differently, e.g. "grounded", "basic", "subject", "basement", "inductive" and the like. In her dissertation Mažgon (2006) translated it as "a subject developed theory". Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 5) stated that the grounded theory was deduced from data and then illustrated by quoting examples of significant data. Their definition implies that the grounded theory is developed in an inductive manner and justified with data.

rative about the phenomenon, which was the subject of the study. It is characteristic for the theory to be constructed from the collected data and to develop in the course of the entire research process. The grounded theory is contextually bound, i.e. it is not a general theory (the findings cannot be generalized without additional definitions), but the theory of a narrower scope, valid only in certain environments and certain conditions, respectively.

Qualitative empirical research is oriented towards examining individual cases (idiographic approach). The study is mostly conducted as a study of one case only or a smaller number of cases, therefore the techniques of data collection are adjusted to a small scale analysis, enabling the researcher to get to know the social environment. At data collection one is not limited to one source or one technique only. Apart from the data acquired by interviews and observation, usually also different documentary sources are used, such as personal documents (a birth certificate, an employment record, a passport, letters, photos...), different records produced in the process of data collecting, transcriptions of tape recordings, video shots, etc. Only the pluralism of data collection techniques and their mutual combination can provide for linking the findings of individual phenomena or aspects into a meaningful integrity. The qualitative research is carried out in line with the principles of the interpretative paradigm, i.e. the focus is on examining the subjective experiences of an individual and on recognising the importance which the individual attaches to specific events, whereby not even the subjective views of the researcher of the studied situation are neglected. The aim is integrated and detailed cognition of phenomena, preferably in natural and concrete circumstances, for the researcher is interested in the context of the pursued activities. As part of the environment, the researcher is not only able to understand what the person is conveying in a form of a rational message and standardized speech, but also the indirect implications of this speech with a specific syntax, contextual lapses, hidden meanings and speech breaks are perceived. Wishes, expectations, interests, needs and personal opinions of the people included into the research should help the researcher to better comprehend the examined phenomena. In this context, the researcher should be aware of the fact that with his or her participation and with the researched situation itself, he or she is influencing the events he or she is observing, and the discursive reality, as his/her research object.

It is important that also the criteria of assessment of scientific findings established with the qualitative research are in line with epistemological bases of the qualitative research.

Criteria to Assess the Quality of Scientific Findings Established with the Qualitative Research

The quality of the quantitative research is usually defined by the notions, such as reliability, validity, objectivity and sensitivity. If the properties of the applied measuring instruments are satisfying, the research findings should pro-

vide as detailed and consistent image as possible of the objective reality. Sagadin (1993) described the properties of measure applied in the quantitative research by means of knowledge tests. In analogy to this, the characteristics of measure apply to other data collection instruments as well. As to the validity he stated: »Test validity describes its quality to measure exactly what it is supposed to measure; a test is valid in as much as it measures exactly this.« (ibid. p. 73). »The instrument is reliable or consistent if the results or data obtained are the same when it is applied again with the same individuals.« (ibid, p. 76). Sagadin defines »the test objectivity«, on the basis of different aspects, i.e. the objectivity of testing (carrying out a test is objective if its results are not influenced by the subjective factor of a testing person), the objectivity in evaluating responses (a test is objective when different assessors equally evaluate the same response) and the objectivity of interpretation (the interpretation of the test outcomes should not depend on the subjective judgement of the interpreter; the same results should be interpreted in the same manner). Apart from the aforementioned characteristics within the quantitative research the sensitivity of the instrument is often mentioned. The sensitivity of a knowledge test increases if it determines the smaller possible differences in knowledge of individuals (Toličič, Zorman 1965). The test sensitivity is presented by the scope of dispersion of test results around the mean value.

From the eighties of the previous century onwards numerous authors (such as Lüders and Reichertz 1986, Lincoln and Guba 1985, Flick 1998) posed the question whether it was possible to transfer traditional criteria established in the quantitative research into the qualitative research regarding the fact that both research paradigms deal with comprehending reality and its examination accordingly, yet in a totally different manner. Glaser and Strauss (1967) expressed their doubts about the applicability of the quantitative criteria as criteria to assess the credibility of theories based on the data obtained from the qualitative research. They proposed that criteria of assessment covering all levels of the research process (collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of data) should be based on common characteristics of the qualitative research. Drawing on this doubt there were several attempts to establish appropriate criteria for the qualitative research substituting for the validity and reliability criteria.

The authors working on qualitative criteria can be classified into four groups regarding their different approaches. (1) Positivistic approach in qualitative research is defended by representatives in favour of applying the same criteria as in the quantitative research. They justify it by pinpointing mainly internal and external reliability and internal and external validity. Internal validity (Mason 1996, Mesec 1998, Silverman 2005) marks the level of agreement among different researchers on what they saw and what they heard and the level of their harmonization at analyzing the collected data. External reliability (LeCompte and Goetz 1982) applies to the possibility of repeating the research. A good internal validity (Flick 1998, LeCompte and Goetz 1982, Sagadin 2001, Mesec 1998) is shown by the research in which the findings are justified in the examined situation. External validity (LeCompte in Goetz 1982, Sagadin 2001,

Mesec 1998) is mainly related to the possibility of generalizing the findings from the examined situation to other situations. (2) Postpositivistic approach supports the standpoint that qualitative empirical research is a different form of the scientific research from the quantitative research, therefore different methodological approaches should be employed. The analysis of the proposed criteria shows that in the majority of cases the issue is mainly about different description of the criteria existing in the quantitative research. So, for example Moser (1977) mentions transparency demanding a systematic description of the whole research process, which is the alternative to the inner validity; harmonization within which the compliance among goals, theoretical bases and methods of research work is examined and is the alternative to reliability; and, the influence of the researcher, with which the subjective influence of the researcher on the data collection procedure and on the whole research process is examined, and which is the alternative to objectivity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) mention credibility, relating to the fact whether the researcher managed to hold different views on the examined situation and draws such a conclusion with which individuals included in the examined situation will agree and, which is the alternative to internal validity; transferability, on the basis of which it could be estimated whether it is possible to transfer the findings of the certain research into other environments, and which is the alternative to external validity; consistency, with which by reviewing the whole research it is examined whether the procedures were correctly carried out, whether they are supported by the gathered material, whether at repeated analysis of the collected data the researcher would come to the same conclusions, which is the alternative to reliability; and the possibility of validation relating to the fact whether also other researchers would come to the same conclusions when reviewing the research, and which is the alternative to objectivity. Steinke (1999) mentions the criterion of intersubjective reproduction enabling critical communication on empirical research among researchers and readers, and the criterion of coherence that should be ensured during the whole research process, the mentioned criteria being alternatives to internal validity. The indication criterion, against which suitability of the applied research procedures is estimated, is an alternative to reliability. The criterion of reflected subjectivity according to which one should think about the extent to which the researcher's subjectivity influenced the developed theory and the criterion of empirical grounding according to which it is estimated whether the developed theory is supported by the collected materials, are alternatives to objectivity. The limitation criterion referring to the possibility of generalizing the findings to other circumstances and the criterion of relevance at which the applicative value of the research findings is estimated, are both alternatives to external validity.

Although the criteria of assessing the quality of scientific findings established with the qualitative research were named differently by the authors supporting the postpositivistic approach within the qualitative research, the mentioned criteria are taken over from the quantitative research. Therefore also at the level of methodological theory the fact is often overlooked that quali-

tative research is based on different epistemological assumptions than quantitative research. Analytical induction, denoting the approach to the data analysis and assuming that it is possible to universally explain the research problem, i.e. to explain all the researched problems, as well as triangulation, the role and importance of which for qualitative research is analyzed in detail in this paper, are also classified into the postpositivistic criteria group. (3) The postmodernist approach rejects the possibility of defining any criteria of quality assessment of the qualitative research findings at all. The supporters of this approach are convinced that the sole idea of assessing the qualitative research is contrary to the nature of the qualitative research. "If we perceive the social reality as a constantly changing reality, than there is no need to find out whether our research instruments measure accurately" (Marshall and Rossman 1989, p. 25). Scheurich (1997) and Smith (1993) are convinced that validity should be radically changed and harmonized with the basic characteristics of phenomenological research if it is to be kept in the qualitative research (4) The post-structuralist approach is to develop a wholly new set of criteria, deriving from the qualitative research (cf. Hammersley 1992, Lincoln and Denzin 1994). According to Lincoln and Denzin (1994) the quantitative research methodology should be taken into account at designing the qualitative research, including subjectivity, feelings and other factors which are neglected by the quantitative research. Lather (1993) depicted validity as a multiple, partial concept, that could never be fully captured, assuming the following four forms: the ironic validity, the paralogic / neo-pragmatic validity, the rhizomatic validity and the sensual validity. The ironic validity expounds the problem of representation, as all reality representations supposedly lack real bases, being only rhetoric. The paralogic (neo-pragmatic) validity presumes the goal of scientific research not to be the communication with reality, but rather defining the differences and describing the contrasts. In his endeavours the researcher mainly focuses on the establishment of heterogeneousness, disagreements and multiple discourses. The validity of findings can also be tested by stating the extent to which the mentioned goal was achieved. The rhizomatic validity highlights the number of viewpoints included in the interpretation and enables the establishment of new, contextually bound criteria (i.e. criteria bound to individual research). The sensual validity is part of feminist discussions on objectivity, its predominant concern being the difference between the male and female aspect; the former assuming the possibility to describe the society from the viewpoint of an objective observer, whereas the latter allows »imperfection«, effort taking, and provides for accepting the views of others and for combining the partial views into the mutual integrity.

In continuation of the paper the focus will be on triangulation, one of the most frequently applied criteria of assessing the quality of scientific findings established within the qualitative research.

Definition of Triangulation

According to the conventionally accepted definition, triangulation is »the use of multiple methods in the study of the same object« (Denzin 1978, Richardson 2003, Bryman 2004). In Slovenian educational standard books on methodology, the term »method« is used for the level of studying the educational field (Sagadin 1993, p. 12). When classifying the educational research methods according to »active – manipulative« and gnoseologic criteria, the author states the descriptive method, causal – nonexperimental and causal – experimental method. For a survey, an interview and suchlike, the author employs the term »technique«. In foreign standard books, the term »method« is used: (1) in the sense of the research type (e.g. qualitative research), (2) in the sense of the level of getting to know the researched field (e.g. the descriptive method), as well as in the sense of (3) the stage of the research, e.g. collecting data (e.g. survey method, interview method) (cf. Cohen and Manion 1990).

The spade-work where triangulation employment was represented for the first time was published in 1959 by Campbell and Fiske, the experimental psychologists. They introduced the multimethod – multitrait matrix, in which they employed several quantitative techniques, by means of which they measured psychological characteristics of the studied persons. In this way, they wanted to prove that the dispersion of data is the consequence of the studied characteristics and not the consequence of the applied techniques (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998, p. 41). In social sciences, triangulation was first used as a technique for checking the validity of the research findings (Flick 1998, Tashakkori in Teddlie 1998, Neuman 2003, Bogdan and Biklen 2003, Richardson 2003, Bryman 2004, Stake 2005), based on the belief that we could reject or acknowledge the research hypotheses only if we had come to the same conclusions by means of different methods. Nevertheless, later, the importance of triangulation, as well as its employment, increased significantly.

Denzin (1978) extended the notion of triangulation, saying that triangulation of methods is only one form of triangulation. In his opinion there are also data sources triangulation, the investigator triangulation and the theory triangulation (about this also: Flick 1998, Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998, Neuman 2003, Janesick 1998). Janesick (1998, p. 47) added the fifth triangulation form, namely the scientific discipline triangulation. The comprehension that triangulation is not merely a technique for validating the scientific findings, but that it also provides for more thorough understanding of each researched phenomenon, was increasingly extended. »Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation. The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry (Flick, 1998, p. 230, Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p. 5).

We speak about data sources triangulation when researchers, observing a particular object of the research, use as many different data sources as possible.

Denzin (1978, p. 295-297) distinguishes data sources from methods of data generation. The collection data methods refer to research methods per se, whereas by triangulating data sources, researchers can employ the same method in different situations to get a more detailed insight into the observational problem (e.g. If the researcher wants to get information on the particular school climate he can interview teachers, pupils, social school workers, the headmaster and/or parents. Each of the interviewees will express his or her opinion about the researched problem. The combination of all the interviewees' answers will provide the researcher with a significantly better insight into the observational problem than he could get with only one interview).

By triangulating data sources we discern three subtypes, namely time, space and person, which are interrelated. The level of one of them demands the study of the other two. A focus on space and time as observational units implies their relationship to the observations of persons. Thus, the researcher can study the examined problem at different times of a day, a week, a month, or a year. Besides, units of observation can be different places with ongoing activities. With personal analysis, we can distinguish three levels, namely (1) the aggregate one, (2) the interactive one, and (3) the collectivity.

(1)With the aggregate analysis, we examine an individual and not a group, relationships between individuals, organizations... (2)With the interactive analysis, the observational unit is an individual as an interacting person. Thus, the focus is neither on an individual nor on a group, but on the interactions of this individual. (3)With the collectivity, the observational unit is a group, an organization, a community, or an entire society. Individuals and their interactions are examined only in as much as they reflect the characteristics of the whole group.

At the investigator triangulation multiple researchers are included into the observation of the research problem. In researches, there is mostly a research team, formed to examine the problem, each of the researchers playing a different role in the observational process. At this triangulation, multiple researchers have the same roles, performing the same tasks. Finally, their findings are compared and completed. It is more difficult to implement the triangulation of researches due to the lack of sufficient funding; at the same time it is sometimes difficult to ensure a higher number of researchers that would otherwise deal with the same field of expertise in different scientific disciplines.

Theory triangulation is employed when examining the observational problem with multiple theoretical assumptions. Theory triangulation is necessary mainly in the fields of research in case of theoretical discordance. Theory triangulation means the use of different hypotheses when planning particular stages of the research. However, different hypotheses are often employed only in the interpretation of data. The use of theoretical triangulation reduces the possibility of researchers' premature acceptance of hypotheses since every hypothesis has to be confronted with all the other assumptions, also with the contradictory ones. The triangulation procedure should begin with making an extensive list of assumptions about a certain researched problem (including the possible in-

terpretations for each of the assumptions), perceived from different theoretical aspects that are empirically tested in the further course of research. In the end the list of assumptions is devised, that were validated or not with the empirical test; thus theories are evaluated and redesigned, on the basis of which the assumptions were made. The final report is usually a combination of assumptions contradicting each other at the beginning. The theory triangulation encourages the continuity in theory and research (apart from the evidence confirming the assumptions also the counterevidence should be sought to be examined in the further course of research) (more on the topic: Denzin 1978, p. 297–301).

The review of standard books treating methodological triangulation shows that methodological triangulation is viewed as the combination of different kinds of researches (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998, Neuman 2003, Patton 1990, Bryman 2004), as well as the combination of different data collection techniques (Denzin 1978, Flick 1998, Morse 1998, Richardson 2003).

Neuman (2003, p. 139, also Morse 1998, p. 66) distinguishes two different ways of combining methods, namely (1) the sequential method combination and (2) the parallel method combination. (1) At the sequential method combination the methods are consecutively employed (we begin with the qualitative part of the research having finished the quantitative part of it; only after we have collected data by means of an interview, a survey questionnaire is produced). (2) The parallel method combines simultaneous employment of both methods (the qualitative and the quantitative part of the research are carried out simultaneously; a survey questionnaire and an interview are employed at the same time).

To the above mentioned ways of combining methods, described by Neuman, Creswell (1995, p. 177) another two ways of method combination are added, namely (3) the equivalent combination method and (4) the dominant – less dominant combination method. (3) At the equivalent method combination both employed methods occupy equivalent positions regarding the whole research (the findings acquired by means of the qualitative research are as important as the findings acquired by means of the quantitative research). (4) The dominant – less dominant method combination implies that one employed method has a more important role in the whole research than another employed method (e.g. the findings of the qualitative research are used only as an additional interpretation for findings acquired by means of the quantitative research; the answers from the interview are included only into the interpretation of the results obtained from the survey questionnaire). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998, p. 18) point out that one method is not necessarily in an inferior position all the time, during the whole research, while the other one is occupying a superior position. The position of a particular method depends on the stage of the research. As a result, they add the fifth way of combining methods: (5) designs with a multilevel use of approaches, whereby the superior/inferior way of the method depends on the momentary stage of the research (e.g. observing pupils, more attention is paid to the results obtained from interviews, whereas the results obtained by means of the survey questionnaires only provide for the additional dimension. Howe-

ver, in the research stage, in which we acquire data from teachers, our major information source is the survey questionnaire, whereas findings acquired by means of interviews are employed as a supplement).

The discipline triangulation means that a research problem is examined in an interdisciplinary way. Discipline triangulation is much connected to the theory triangulation represented by Denzin (1978), although a discipline has a more extensive meaning than theory. The discipline is a branch, a field of science, whereas the theory is a sum of logically connected findings, attitudes or assumptions, explaining something in a scientific way within a particular discipline. The assumption of the discipline triangulation is investigator triangulation. If investigators belonging to different disciplines (psychology, pedagogy, philosophy, sociology, art ...) are included into the study of a research problem, the observational unit can be comprehended significantly better and in a more comprehensive manner. Each scientific discipline produces specific "glasses", through which the studied problems are observed. Different conceptual framework enables posing different questions, finding different manners of responses to them, coming to different conclusions and creating an overall understanding of the researched problem.

The Role of Triangulation in Qualitative Research

Triangulation is a strategy enabling researchers to understand the observational object significantly better and in a more comprehensive manner. Multiple triangulation, assuming the combination of multiple triangulation forms, i.e. the triangulation of investigators, theories, data sources, methods and/or disciplines, provides for the exhaustive data interpretation. However, there is a question whether triangulation can also be used as the criterion of assessing the quality of scientific findings established with the qualitative research. If multiple methods, investigators, data sources, theories and disciplines result in the same findings, we can assume that we have achieved valid data. Triangulation can certainly not be considered as the criterion of assessing the scientific findings quality of the qualitative research only when findings confirm each other (Bloor 1997). But what if, for example, two researchers observing the same empirical unit come to different conclusions? Are their findings invalid?

Triangulation as the criterion of assessing the quality of scientific findings obtained from the qualitative research was also subjected to criticism. The majority of critics can be classified into two groups. 1) Post-modernistically oriented researchers reject triangulation as the criterion against which the quality of findings obtained from the qualitative research should be assessed, as they do not agree to the reference point of "truth". Postmodernists are changing the traditional view on the validity. L. Richardson (1997, 2003) proposed a transgressive form of validity, which she defined in form of a metaphor by means of a crystal shape. The crystal is a prism, reflecting and breaking the beams thus constantly projecting the changing images of reality. The image we see depends on our

view. For this reason the postmodernists do not agree to there being only one true story; there are many aspects of the same story, and they are all real (cf. Richardson 2003, p. 517, 518, Stake 2005, p. 454). On the basis of this assumption it can be inferred that all perceptions of the researchers and different sources of findings as well as all findings acquired by individual research approaches and data collection techniques are important and equal. As such it is possible to apply them as the criterion of assessing the quality of findings of individual researchers and the findings, respectively, that were acquired by individual approaches and techniques of data collection; however, it is reasonable to combine them mutually, thus linking the findings on individual notions or aspects in a coherent entity. 2) The second group of critics is composed of the researchers who believe in basing the triangulation on epistemological assumptions of the quantitative research which makes it contradictory to the basic characteristics of the qualitative research. Using triangulation as the criterion of assessing the quality of scientific findings obtained from qualitative research would mean comparing the results obtained with different research approaches and data collection techniques, respectively, and comparing the findings of different researchers and the data provided by different information sources. The comparisons would be drawn in order to examine the quality of findings obtained by applying one method (a technique, a researcher, a source of information) (cf. Tashakkorian & Teddlie 1998, p. 82–84). In this way, by comparing the findings, the quality of findings obtained in the quantitative research is established, which is based on the assumption, that hypotheses successfully confirmed by many tests are more valid than the ones subjected to one test only. Such a manner of research also assumes that it is possible to „measure« the same empirical unit more than once. All the aforementioned is contrary to the basic principles of the qualitative research. If a certain notion is placed within a single and specific context, it is, strictly speaking, not possible to be „measured« (observed, protocolled) (more on the topic by Kogovšek 1998). Triangulation as the criterion to assess the quality of findings is thus based on epistemological assumptions of the quantitative research.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 370) point out that it is wrong to expect one researcher's observations to confirm another researcher's observations since the essential instrument of qualitative research is just the researcher himself or herself. The research approaches and views are different due to different disciplines and theoretical assumptions. Consequently, all this may also be the reason for the incoherence of the researchers' findings. The purpose of combining conclusions drawn by different researchers, in view of the qualitative research, cannot be the judgement of observations adequacy made by only one researcher, but the formation of the detailed insight into the observational problem. This is also the purpose of including more researchers into the research. Different data sources usually reflect different views of the same phenomenon. For example, if we interview more persons, each of them may tell us a slightly different story despite describing the same event. However, this cannot mean that one person's story is more exact or valid and that another person's story is wrong or invalid. Each person is involved

into the event in a different way. Therefore, his or her story is the reflection of his or her experience of the event. Wishes, expectations, interests, needs and personal opinions of the people included into the research should help the researcher involved in the qualitative research achieve more integrated knowledge of the observational phenomena. Every method and theory denote a part of reality in their own way. Thus, we cannot expect that the research results, produced on the basis of different methods and theories, will automatically produce a complete picture of the researched phenomenon. Whichever method and technique, respectively, is applied, it influences what we see. Bloor (1997) claims that the direct comparison of different methods and theories is basically problematic since the research results depend on the circumstances of their production.

Conclusion

The paper deals with the qualitative research as an independent research form, developed in opposition to the quantitative research. The criteria applied to establish the quality of scientific findings were highlighted and classified into the positivist, post-positivist, post-modern and post-structuralist group. In agreement with Sagadin (1989, p. 335) about the unfruitfulness of "paradigmatic exclusivism", we believe that when establishing the qualitative research criteria the classification of an individual criterion in a particular group is less important than its harmonisation with the basic characteristics of the qualitative research. Clearly set criteria are the very factor ensuring the scientific attribute of the certain research type and providing for the rational grounds for the action based on the research findings. Within the qualitative research we believe it is reasonable to examine the internal validity, as well, although it has been directly adopted from the quantitative research into the qualitative research. It is important that the research findings provide as precise as possible explanation of the research phenomenon, further that the researcher presents and combines different views on the researched situation into a joint conclusion, that causative relations are established, explained and justified and that all findings are supported by the collected data. In the paper special attention was paid to triangulation and its role within the qualitative research. Triangulation is defined as combinations of different methods, research approaches, techniques, sources of information, science disciplines, researchers and theories within the scope of one piece of research, in order to get as comprehensive an insight into the researched situation as possible. If we summarize the opinions of the supporters and critics of triangulation, we can conclude that triangulation contributes to building up a more true image of the researched phenomenon, but not a more objective one. Therefore it is reasonable to deploy triangulation as a strategy to ensure the quality of scientific findings obtained from the qualitative research, and not as a specific criterion of assessing the quality of findings established in the qualitative research, as it would thus be deviated from epistemological characteristics of the qualitative research.

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Terminological quandaries with the term »museum pedagogy«^{*}

Abstract: The main topics of this article are some terminological problems with the term »museum pedagogy«, which has been used in Slovenia for more than two decades. This term is problematic for at least two reasons. Firstly, because it includes educational work with both children and adults in museums and galleries, but at the same time it does not take into consideration a crucial change which took place with the establishment of Andragogy as a specific educational science. The second reason why the term »museum pedagogy« is problematic is that it leads to the wrong conclusion that Museum Pedagogy is a specific educational science or discipline, although actually it is not.

Key words: terminology, museum pedagogy, andragogy

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Having been accepted in Slovenia in the last two decades as a common term¹ which denotes practice as well as, increasingly, the theory of educational work in museums and galleries, the term »museum pedagogy« at first sight does not seem to be problematic at all. Nevertheless, it is problematic, for at least two reasons.

Firstly, because it is about a term which deals with the whole scope of educational work in museums and galleries, and which includes work with children and adults as well, but at the same time it does not take into consideration a crucial change that took place with the establishment of Andragogy as a special science of education of adults.² If the change, which is a consequence of the di-

¹ * In the English-speaking world the term »museum education« is used, although it is not an equivalent to »museum pedagogy. The literal translation would nevertheless be »museum pedagogy«, although it would be at the same time quite questionable. The term »pedagogy« has a more restricted meaning in English than in Slovenian or in German or French (Translator's Note).

Prior to that, educational activities in the National Gallery in Ljubljana were named »Artistic Education« (Cevc, 1979), »Aesthetic Education« or »Artistic Painting Education« (Vrhunc, 1973, p. 16). All the terminological quandaries in the continuation of the paper shall be dealt with under the term »Museum Pedagogy«, especially in the context of Slovenian art museums and galleries, although it can be applied to other types of museums as well.

² The term »Andragogy« (German: Andragogik) was, according to D. Demetrio, first used by A. Kapp in 1833 to denote everything which concerns education as an existential continuum. Later, in 1921, E. Rosenstock again used the term in his analysis of functions of education of adults in Germany (Demetrio, 2003, p. 106). Regarding Slovenia, probably the first to use the term »andra-gogika« was K. Ozvald in the paper »Twenty Years of Pedagogy in Yugoslavia (Muršak, 2002/4, p. 130). Andragogy was later dealt with by numerous authors: H. Nanselmann (Switzerland), F. Poggeler (Germany), M. Ogrizović (Yugoslavia), T.T. Have (The Netherlands), B. Schwartz (France), J.A. Simpson (Great Britain), F.M. De Sanctis, itd. (Italy), as well as M. Knowles in the USA (Demetrio, 2003, p. 106). M. Knowles admits in one of his papers titled »Andragogy« that he stole the term from a Yugoslavian specialist in education of adults, who in the middle of the sixties of the previous century approached him after a summer workshop had finished and said with gleaming eyes: »Malcolm, you preach and practice Andragogy!« Since he had never heard about Andragogy before, Malcolm asked: »Gogy what?!«, causing the immediate explanation by the Yugoslavian expert that it is a derivation of a Greek word »aner« meaning »adult« (Knowles, 2005, p. 27). Although the term »Andragogy« has established itself internationally, in the USA and Great Britain the term »adult education« was still used, whilst in France (similarly as in Spain and Italy) »formation des adultes« was in use (Besnard, 1994, p. 62-63).

vision of Pedagogy as general science which deals with education into Pedagogy (science of education of children) and Andragogy (science of education of adults), was legitimate, it would therefore be more appropriate to talk about »Museum Pedagogy and Andragogy«. The division had already been known in the time when the term »Museum Pedagogy« was introduced. At that time Andragogy was not any longer considered as one of the pedagogical disciplines,³ and educational work in museums and galleries was not solely aimed at work with school children. These are the two main reasons why the then introduced term »museum pedagogy« was in this regard questionable. Today, when Andragogy has entirely established itself, its use is even more problematic. Nevertheless, it does not mean that its use is questionable in all regards. Actually it becomes problematic when it is used to denote theory and practice of education of adults in museums and galleries. That the establishment in museums and galleries is aware of this problem can be seen through the fact that activities intended for adults in the programs of museums and galleries, at least in some places, are classified under the chapter »Andragogy«.⁴ However, the use of the term »Andragogy« is still not consistent. For example, there is still widespread use of the term »museum pedagogue« instead of »museum andragogue« for the staff in museums and galleries who are responsible for educational work, even if it includes working with adults. The restrictive employment policy in this field hinders specialisation of the profession in the sense that museums and galleries cannot, along with museum pedagogues, also have museum andragogues. Precisely because of that, namely because most museums and galleries cannot materialise that aspect, museum pedagogues must also act as museum andragogues. It seems that it would be most appropriate to name them »museum pedagogues and andragogues«, whilst naming respectively the theory and practice of educational work in museums and galleries Museum Pedagogy and Andragogy.

³ *Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Pedagogy*, 1963, keyword »andragogija«, pp. 41-42. Pedagogy was understood as a *theory of upbringing and education* (Blättner, 1979, p. 8). Some authors leave an open question whether it is about so called *scientific* or *practical* theory (Brezinka, 1984, p. 9), although, in this case, the matter is irrelevant. What matters is that Pedagogy is understood as a theory (science, doctrine, theory, etc.) of education in general and not only of education of children.

⁴ In the booklet *Pedagogical Programs in Slovenian Museums and Galleries* (1999), under the heading *Independent Pedagogical Programs*, activities for adults and children had not been separated yet. In the next booklet *Pedagogical Programs in Slovenian Museums and Galleries 2001/2002* (2001, p. 79) only the Museum of Natural Sciences of Slovenia named activities for adults *Andragogical Programs*. In the booklet of the same title from 2003 (2003, p. 41, p.47, p. 98, p. 102) some museums already had a rubric *Andragogical Programs*. The next publication (2005, p. 78, p. 98, p. 114) reduced the number of rubrics *Andragogical Programs*. In the last booklet of the series (2008, p. 61, p.113, p. 123, p. 142, p. 151) curators named activities for adults as follows: *Programs for Adults, Andragogical Programs, Workshops for Adults*. It has to be mentioned that the first booklet of the series introduced 58 museums and galleries, the number later rising to 63, while the last one already presented 155 institutions.

Would the term »museum pedagogy and andragogy« be more proper than the term »museum pedagogy«?

The question of whether the change of term »museum pedagogy« into »museum pedagogy and andragogy«⁵ would be the best solution still remains. On one hand, such renaming seems to be reasonable if one agrees with the interpretation that the use of »pedagogy« in this case is inappropriate because the etymological origin of the word »pedagogy« clearly indicates guiding of a child,⁶ while in the museums they also include guiding of adults. On the other hand, if we dwell on etymology a bit longer, the term would also be questionable even when one meant by it the science of education of children, as the term, taken literally, does not denote education of a child. It means guiding of a child, as at the beginning it meant escorting a child from home to school and back.

In antiquity this was the task of a slave called a pedagogue. He had to take his master's child to a teacher and back. The guidance was actually an escort of a child, and as such it was not meant as education. Therefore the use of the term »pedagogy« is unquestionable only if one understands its meaning on the basis of etymology, and the word »guidance«, which is an essential part of it, is not taken literally but only circumstantially. Historically, a shift in meaning already took place in the Hellenistic period, when a pedagogue's task received its moral component, because on the way between school and home he also had to control the children and protect them from various dangers and vices, and above all because a pedagogue himself became a person who imparted on a child manners and formed their character and morality. That is how the word »pedagogue« started losing its etymological meaning and more and more frequently meant an educator, i.e. a person entrusted with the moral upbringing of children. It never meant that a teacher as a pedagogue wasn't a teacher (*didáskalos*) (Marrou, 1981, p. 217-218). He remained a person who escorted a child to a teacher.⁷ As we have already seen, the escort was not taken literally as it also meant education.⁸ Later, »a pedagogue« denoted an adult who guided a child towards knowledge (Best, 1994, p. 726), but not in the literal sense as guiding to

⁵ Following the example of renaming, let's say, the Department of Pedagogy of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana into the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy.

⁶ The word »pedagogy« derives from Greek words »país«, »paidós« (a child, a young boy) and »ágein« (to guide). The word »pedagogue« (*paidagogós*) has the same origin (Brezinka, 1984, p. 9, 47).

⁷ There were also pedagogues (*paedagogi*) in Ancient Rome. They were slaves (usually selected educated Greeks) who guided and escorted their young masters to school and morally educated them (Marrou, 1981, II., p. 65-67).

⁸ In Plato's *Laws* also, as G. Kocjančič mentions in one of the footnotes, »guiding is sometimes used almost synonymously with *paideia*; e.g. 673a, 819a« (Plato, 2006, footnote 113, p. 505). It is similar in paragraph 641b, where the word »παιδαγωγηθέντος« can be translated as »guided« or »educated« (Jaeger, *Paideia*, footnote 54, p. 338). Jaeger also says that Plato in his *Laws* showed a tendency towards preference for the use of the word »παιδαγωγείν«. Before that Plato understood every effort of mankind to reach virtue (*areté*) as education (*paideia*), and now he treats pedagogy (*παιδαγωγία*) as a source of *paideia* for adults as well (*ibid.*, footnote 88, p. 340).

a teacher as a source of knowledge but knowledge itself. Such a shift in meaning could take place only after the term »pedagogue« also denoted a teacher. Today the term bears a broader sense, as it also includes those who are occupied with the theory of education.

Besides that, the etymological meaning of the word »pedagogy« – guiding a child – blurs the very meaning which it has been given by Pedagogy as a science of education (of children). Although it was not about the science of education of children, but skill or technique, which can be clearly seen from the fact that it was named »paidagogikè téchne«, and later in Latin »ars paedagogica« (Brezinka, 1984, p. 47), Pedagogy was nevertheless later understood as a philosophical discipline and ultimately as an educational science. Therefore the argument which justifies the usage of the term »Andragogy« by the etymology of the word »pedagogy«, claiming that a term which denotes the guiding of a child cannot be suitable for denoting an educational science which deals with adults, is not quite convincing, as the essence of Pedagogy does not lie in guiding a child, which was the original meaning (etymon) of the word »pedagogy«, but in a definition which says that Pedagogy is a science which deals with education. That is why the term »pedagogy«, taken literally, is equally questionable for Pedagogy as well as for Andragogy, if being educational sciences is essential for both. The use of the term »andragogy« to denote an educational science dealing with adults is from an etymological point of view more appropriate than the term »pedagogy«, all the more because it has been applied in phrases »pedagogy of adults« and »adult pedagogy«, which, if taken literally, do not make sense. However, the problem lies in the fact that the term »andragogy«, which is a new compound word,⁹ having been formed analogously to the term »pedagogy« – i.e. the Greek word »child« (*país, paidós*) has been substituted with the Greek word »adult« (*aner, andros*) – does not have (contrary to the term »pedagogy«) any basis in the history of Ancient Greece. Besides, the word »aner«, which has been applied in the compound, does not denote a human but an adult male, which in some parts has triggered feminist criticism (Knowles, 2005, p. 27). The very term »andragogy«, taken literally, does not mean educational science which deals with adults, which is the definition of Andragogy, but guiding an adult male.

From the terminological point of view, we would therefore not gain much if we changed the term »museum pedagogy« with the term »museum pedagogy and andragogy«. Nevertheless, if we decided to play with etymology, the term »museum anthropology« would be more appropriate as its meaning range would encompass guiding every human. Besides that, the very guidance of visitors through museums and galleries is still one of most frequent forms of education. However, even if this term was found more appropriate than the terms »museum pedagogy« and »museum pedagogy and andragogy«, it would still be

⁹ The explanation of the word »andragogy« (andragogika) in Verbinc's *Dictionary of Foreign Words*, which says »andragogika-e ' [andr(o)- + (peda)gogika] science of education of adults« (Verbinc, 1974, p. 50) also shows that this is a case of a compound word, where the relation between Pedagogy and Andragogy is not clear.

inappropriate for those who think that the term, which denotes the core of what today is meant by the term »museum pedagogy«, is appropriate only if it fits the pattern etymologically. But, it doesn't, because it only means guiding as educational practice in museums and galleries, but not also the theory and science which study that practice. If we followed the path of those who tried to solve the problem of general educational science, which emerged as a result of the division of Pedagogy (as general educational science) into Pedagogy (educational science which deals with children) and Andragogy (educational science which deals with adults), by introducing the term »educology«, we might use the term »museum educology«. Nevertheless, we would still be compelled to use the term »museum anthropology« to denote educational practice in museums in galleries. It would be the same if we followed the terminology used in Italy, where instead of »museum pedagogy« the term »museum didactics« (*didattica museale*) is used. As long as Didactics, as a theory of teaching and education, generally encompassed education of children as well as adults, it would be the solution to this terminological quandary. But, since there is also Andragogical Didactics, which deals with education of adults, we would also face the same problem as with the usage of »pedagogy« and »andragogy«. Besides, some Italian authors think that the term »museum didactics« is not appropriate because it is semantically too narrow. That is why some of them use the term »museum pedagogy and didactics« as a substitute. However, even that is not logical if pedagogy comprises didactics as its constitutional part, as one of the pedagogical disciplines.

In other words, neither the introduction of the term »museum educology« nor »museum didactics« appears to be the real solution. Moreover, in both cases we would find ourselves in an even worse position than we are now, when the term »museum pedagogy« is being used. It is, by all means, etymologically inappropriate, but, being understood as it is, it comprises both: the theory and practice of education of children and adults in museums and galleries. The fact that Pedagogy, after the establishment of Andragogy as a separate science, has ceased to be understood as general science of education puts into question the understanding of Museum Pedagogy as a general science of education of children and adults in museums and galleries. This causes an emergence of another question: Does this mean that the usage of the term »museum pedagogy« has to be limited to denoting the theory and practice of education of children and adults in museums and galleries? Not necessarily. The term can remain in use regardless of the fact that, despite its different etymological meaning, it also encompasses education of adults in museums and galleries. The usage is actually not more questionable than the usage of the term »atomic physics« for denoting science, which definitely does not deal with atoms as indivisible particles, which is the etymological meaning of the word »atom«.¹⁰

¹⁰ The argument was used by A. Vukasović as well, when he opposed the introduction of the term »andragogy« (Vukasović, Zagreb 1971, p. 450).

Is the term »museum pedagogy« a denotation for a pedagogical science?

The second reason why the term »museum pedagogy« is problematic is that it induces the wrong conclusion, which characterizes Museum Pedagogy as a special educational science or discipline, although actually it is not. Museum Pedagogy is not one of the disciplines of Pedagogy, which, according to its specificity, differs from other pedagogical disciplines, such as Social Pedagogy differs from School Pedagogy. Museum Pedagogy, at least here, is not a part of Pedagogy at all.¹¹ Actually, so far it couldn't be, as it hasn't been developed as a theoretical science, but has been understood in the first place as a denotation for practical educational work in museums and galleries.

Within the syntagm »museum pedagogy«, the term »pedagogy« usually denoted everything which concerned educational work in museums and galleries, while the term »museum« denoted that educational work in museums and galleries was specific and therefore different from work in school, although it had frequently been under the influence of School Pedagogy. The specificity is displayed more at the level of goals than methods and forms of work. Educational work in museums and galleries follows the goals of museums and galleries while in schools it follows the goals of school. Some goals are, indeed, similar – if not the same – while the others are complementary. That is why the educational work in both kinds of institutions is complementary, but only if education in school differs from the one in museum and galleries. If they were the same, they would only continue from each other and not supplement each other. With this conclusion it would be fair to admit that the influence of school on work in museums and galleries has been much greater than the opposite.¹² Nevertheless, that fact does not question the specificity of work in museums and galleries. As the term »museum pedagogy« denotes this very specificity of practical educational work in museums and galleries, its application does not seem to be questionable. But that is only a presumption, because if we understand the syntagm »museum pedagogy« in that way, we use the term »pedagogy« contrary to the common understanding of Peda-

¹¹ Museum Pedagogy does not belong to systematisation of pedagogical sciences and cannot be studied within studies of Pedagogy or any other science. This is not typical for Slovenia only. In France as well, until 1972, Museum Pedagogy could not be studied within studies of pedagogical or educational sciences (cf. Juif, F. Dovero, 1972). Something similar to what we denote as Museum Pedagogy can be studied within the studies of Exhibition Didactics at the University of Vienna or college studies of Museum Pedagogy at the Inter-University Research Institute for Correspondence Studies in Klagenfurt (Fliedel, 1993, p. 25). Some Italian universities also offer studies of Museum Didactics within studies of educational sciences.

¹² One of the attempts to influence work in kindergartens was for example seminars for kindergarten tutors and teachers in the National Gallery in Ljubljana. A didactical kit »The Gallery in Kindergarten, School and Home« (Tavčar, 1995) was also published. The publications *Invisible Sides of Visible Art* (Tavčar, 1991); *Dawn of Time, Myth in Picture and Word* (Novak, Tavčar, 1997), have had a certain influence on lessons of History of Art as well as Art in particular types of secondary schools, as they are cited in the catalogue of skills and as recommended reading for the mentioned school subjects.

gogy as a scientific discipline whose field of research is education. Education is its object of research no matter where it takes place. That is why the term »museum pedagogy« is also questionable if it is solely used as a denotation for practical educational work in museums and galleries.

As we have seen, the use of the term in Slovenia would also be problematic if we applied it as a denotation for a separate pedagogical discipline, for it would be applied for something which does not exist. Namely, Museum Pedagogy is not one of the disciplines of Pedagogy. The term is also questionable because Pedagogy, which operates in museums and galleries, is not some specific Museum Pedagogy. It is mainly School Pedagogy, applied in educational work in museums and galleries. That is why the relationship between Museum and School Pedagogy, which only virtually corresponds to the specific difference between two entities within the genus pedagogy, could probably be easily elucidated with a denoted difference between *the present* and *the absent*, (cf. Močnik, Žižek, 1981, p. 376) between the absent Museum and existing School Pedagogy. School Pedagogy lies in the place of Museum Pedagogy, which actually does not exist. School Pedagogy is taking the empty place representing Museum Pedagogy in the field of educational work in art museums. The basic, and at the same time existential, question of Museum Pedagogy is therefore how to surpass this mimetic phase and develop its own specificity. However, developing one's own specificity is not enough. Just as museums have to develop their own specific Pedagogy in relation to School Pedagogy, specific kinds of museums have to develop specific pedagogical approaches related to Museum Pedagogy. It is not enough to have Museum Pedagogy in general, as methodical approaches are possible to develop only on the basis of specificity of collections and artefacts on display. Due to the fact that collections and artefacts on display do not only differ in relation to different museums and galleries but also within particular types of museums and galleries, it is clear that Museum Pedagogy can only be a general theoretical framework for developing specific Museum Pedagogies, typical for particular kinds of museums and galleries – for example for art museums and galleries. Educational work there is in many ways different from work in museums of natural science and other museums.

In short, the term »museum pedagogy« is questionable because Museum Pedagogy, at least for now, has not been developed as a scientific discipline. Due to its actual non-existence, it has so far been replaced mainly by School Pedagogy. This means that actually Museum Pedagogy is neither museum (specific pedagogy, essentially different from School Pedagogy) nor Pedagogy (type of pedagogy as scientific discipline). On the other side there emerges a question of whether the comprehension of Pedagogy as a general science of education may become questionable, provided that Pedagogy, in the same way as here, does not deal with education in museums and galleries. If it does not deal with it as a special field of research, it probably cannot lay claim to the status of general science of education, i.e. status of a science, which researches the whole realm of education. Because it limits itself to particular fields of education, other fields of education stay outside its domain, and as such being objects of research of some other new or existing science. Taking into account that even Museum Pedagogy is being

developed as a separate science in some museums and galleries, it may so happen that Museum Pedagogy, or rather what we call today Museum Pedagogy, will eventually develop as a separate scientific discipline outside Pedagogy. It may even become a part of university studies, not within the framework of Pedagogy but rather, let's say, Museology. However, it would be much better if it developed as an interdisciplinary science and was studied as such. It is a question if it would be possible to study it on the undergraduate level or later on the post-graduate level. A reasonable answer to that question would be almost impossible without thorough deliberation on the basic skills and competences which a graduate of such studies would gain. However, such a deliberation, which presents itself as an essential condition for reaching founded expertise on that question, is conditional itself. It depends above all on how one understands Museum Pedagogy. If it is understood as an interdisciplinary science, its denotation will be misleading, as it will lead to the wrong conclusion that it is a matter of one of the pedagogical disciplines. As we have seen, at least here, this is not so. Even museum pedagogues, who are occupied with educational activities in our museums and galleries, are not pedagogues by education but art historians, archaeologists, historians, ethnologists, etc. There is a similar situation with those who try to theoretically reflect this activity and thus develop the theory of educational work in museums and galleries. That is why it is likely to be problematic if these people, who are not pedagogues by education, are called museum pedagogues. By doing that we attribute to them specific pedagogical skills and competences which they often don't possess, as they are mainly self-educated and have never studied Pedagogy. On the other hand, by calling them museum pedagogues we depreciate the profession of a pedagogue, as we invigorate the already widespread wrong opinion that a pedagogue can be anyone who engages in education, even if they don't know much about Pedagogy. However, we don't claim that pedagogical skills can only be obtained through formal university studies. One can certainly gain them through other forms of informal education. However, it probably wouldn't be bad for raising the quality of educational work in our museums and galleries if those who practice this activity had to prove that they indeed possess skills and competences with relevant references or even officially issued document. They would have to prove it in the same way as graduates of non-pedagogical majors of university studies have to if they have a desire to work as school teachers. In this way museums and galleries would have the same standards of educational activities as are required in school. The main reason why it should be done can be put like this: if it is true that a teacher's task can be done only by a person who, besides an adequate professional education in the field which is taught in school as a school subject, has an obligatory pedagogical degree, then it is reasonable to assume that also museum pedagogues can qualitatively perform their profession only if they also possess a pedagogical degree, besides their professional education.¹³ Besides, the introduction of a certificate of a pedagogical degree as a

¹³ Those art historians, historians, etc. who majored in pedagogical studies have already acquired pedagogical knowledge. Despite this, the question remains as to what the most appropriate peda-

precondition for performing educational work in museums and galleries would probably raise the reputation of this profession, which is too often looked down on precisely because it can be performed without adequate additional pedagogical skills. If it were possible to engage in the profession only with a certificate of an attained pedagogical degree, it would probably be valued not only because it is common to value something which requires effort, but also because one would know that it is about a profession which can only be performed by those who, besides an adequate educational degree for a certain field of museum or gallery activity, also possess a pedagogical degree. In this context, when we talk about pedagogical education we indeed have in mind education which also includes an andragogical component, although it is not particularly mentioned, just as the term »museum pedagogy« includes the theory and practice of education of adults, although it cannot be seen from the term »museum pedagogy« itself.

Even from this short and roughly presented analysis of the terminological quandary with the term »museum pedagogy«, which has been used in Slovenia for more than two decades, it is obvious that its meaning is not as clear as it seems. Nevertheless, this un-clearness on the terminological level is not possible to clarify simply by looking for a solution in the etymology of words applied in characterisation of the concept which they denote, but only to more precisely define the very concept of Museum Pedagogy. For un-clearness on the conceptual level does not seem any clearer as from the terminological one. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration if we say that – to paraphrase famous St. Augustine's saying – as long as someone doesn't ask us what Museum Pedagogy is, we know what it is, but when they do, we no longer know.

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gogical education for museum pedagogues would be. It may be similar to teachers', but it also has to differ from it; if not in anything else, then in special didactical skills. It can also be quite different. At the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University of Bologna the program of the studies of Museum Didactics in the school year 2008/2009 has following modules: Main Theoretical Approaches to Museum Didactics, Different Profiles of Educational Museum, Actual and Virtual Museums, Elements of Educational and Didactical Qualities of Museum Areas, Competences of Cultural »Animator« in Museum, System of Museums on the National and International Level.

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Dr Janez Krek

The Father's Function, the Authority of the Teacher and the Conception of Education in the State School

Abstract: The article substantiates the significance, or the role, of the father's function, that is, the Other as the bearer of the Law or the embodiment of rules, in efficient education in the state school. It analyses how, in the process of enculturation, in the adoption of social norms and rules, the personality structure of the individual forms itself and the father's function arises, as defined by the notion of the (symbolic) Law. The key finding of the analysis for the formation of the conception of education of the state school is that pupils in the state school must be placed in a social network based on completely clear and pre-established rules that cannot be arbitrarily adapted. It is only possible to achieve this in the school with mutual reconciliation and by reaching agreement that is subsequently binding for everyone.

Key Words: the father's function, the symbolic Law in discourse, the authority of the teacher, the conception of education of the state school, the Oedipus complex, the Ideal-Self

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Introduction

How to undertake moral education in the state school remains a question that demands exhaustive reflection. In recent years, this question has been linked with the debates, polemics and doubts that have arisen in the implementation of the so-called school educational plan. The fact that primary schools in Slovenia are, by June 2009¹ at the latest, obliged to prepare and accept a so-called school educational plan presents primary schools with the demanding task of reflecting upon their own educational behaviours; that is, if they do not want the acceptance of this demanding document to simply be a »paper tiger«, a deed that will remain more or less on paper. Even without this current framework in which state schools have been placed by the state, however, the fact remains that schools operate within frameworks of contemporary society and moral educational models that constantly change. If moral education in the state school wants to achieve its own goals it must respond appropriately to the challenges of these changes.

The question that we address in the present article in connection with the formation of the conception of education of the state school (see also Kovač Šebart, Krek, Vogrinc 2006; Kovač Šebart 2005) concerns the massive shift in the position of the so-called father's function, that is, the bearer of the Law and thus of authority, in moral education. The basic aim of the article is to substantiate the significance, or the role, of the father's function, that is, the existence of the symbolic Law, in the efficient formation and implementation of the conception of education in the state school. We demonstrate the thesis that it is precisely the existence of the »father's function« in the moral educational concept that we need to consider and implement in the formation of the school concep-

¹ The Act on Amendments and Supplements to the Primary Schools Act, from 2007, charges primary schools with the formation of the so-called school educational plan (Article 60d, with direct links also to the provisions of Articles 60e, 60f, 60g, 60h) and in the interim provisions states that »the school board must accept the educational plan according to the procedures determined by this law by 1 June 2009 at the latest« (Article 48, The Act on Amendments and Supplements to the Primary Schools Act).

tion of education if we do not want moral education in the state school to give in to calls for authoritarianism and surveillance, if we do not want it to swing from one extreme to another in an unconsidered way, and if we do not want moral educational activities in each individual school in which various teachers implement contradictory concepts of authority; concepts experienced from the pupils' perspective as unconsidered, chaotic, unjust (from one side or another) and thus also unsuccessful – a realistic scenario in the absence of agreement on moral education in school.

We can indicate the problem with the words of Paul Verhaeghe (Verhaeghe 2004 Š2000Ć), who points out that at the conclusion of the first half of the previous century »the popular interpretation of Freud presented the authoritarian father as the source of all evil, both on the individual and the sociological levels. Authority had to be defeated; the answer was freedom. The obvious success of this movement from the sixties onwards has led to its exact opposite: today's popular opinion asks, sometimes even implores, for the return of law and order, i.e., for a return to the authoritarian father, once again both on the individual and the sociological levels« (Verhaeghe 2004, p. 31). Verhaeghe defines these shifts as »the collapse of the father's function« and in this connection quotes Colette Soler, who characterises the previous century as »a century in which we wanted to educate the father in his role« (ibid.).

It is possible to trace similar trends in the field of pedagogy, in the definition of the role of the teacher in school. In following these general trends of culture, pedagogy transformed the image of the teacher and the concept of his or her authority in an attempt to rework the authoritative figure of the teacher into a concept and teacher who rejects authoritarianism. Verhaeghe is probably correct when he points out that already in the second half of the previous century society swung back from »freedom« to a demand for »law and order«. However, given the position in which the state school finds itself today it would probably be more accurate to say that these major movements from the previous century still partially retain their influence, and that the functioning of moral education in the state school has thus been placed in a kind of fissure. Is it not, in fact, the state school, precisely because it is an educational institution, that is more than any other institution in society forced into a dilemma about how to behave if pedagogical theories and at least some parents, on the one hand, reject the teacher as a figure of authority while, on the other hand, some parents and the general public expect »order and discipline« to predominate in state schools? This call brings with it a demand that can quickly slide into authoritarianism, the very thing that it is supposed overcome.

The issue of the »absence of the father« in the role of the father's function in moral education was treated by numerous authors in the Slovene sphere in the 1980s and 1990s (Žižek 1985, 1987; Vuk Godina 1988; Šebart 1990, Kroflič 1997; Kovač Šebart 2002) and one of the key references in this connection is the classic study by Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (1979). In spite of this, we believe that the concept needs to be reconsidered and to be placed in the context of the imperative of forming the conception of education in the

state school, an imperative created by the legal demand for primary schools to implement a so-called school educational plan.

The aims of the current article are, on the one hand, epistemological. In theories of the process of moral education and socialisation, as well as the development of the basic structure of the personality, in addition to the established concepts of the contemporary »narcissistic subject«, and also the »Slovene« »Cankarian mother«, in the analysis of the role of the mother a moment remained in the background that Jacques Lacan establishes as key in this context; namely, that for the existence of the father's function, if we understand it as the *intervention of the Law* (which intervenes in the relationship mother-child) it is essential that »the mother establishes the father as the mediator of that which is beyond her law and her caprice, which is simply beyond the law as such« (Lacan, p. 20). We demonstrate that this thesis does not imply a response that would demand a call »back to the father« (to the authoritarian father to whom the mother is subjugated). We place the question of the function of the father in the area of speech and discourse, as well as in concrete discursive practice, and thus also in the area of the conception of education of the state school as the *plan* of discursive practice on which the behaviours of teachers are based. On the other hand, the article has a practical orientation, as the debate about the concept of the father's function can shed new light on and explain certain phenomena that influence the moral educational activity of the teacher and of state schools in the contemporary world. We seek to demonstrate that the implementation of the father's function, or the symbolic Law, in moral education is a way in which it is possible to re-establish a form of teacher authority that is neither capricious nor totalitarian. The treatment of the concept reveals certain reasons why it is necessary to build consensus in the state school regarding its moral educational activities. The implementation of the father's function or the symbolic Law can contribute to the efficiency of the moral educational activities of the state school and to the success of the realisation of the goals that are supposed to be achieved by the school conception of education.

The imperative of the passage from pre-theoretical to theoretical discourse or: the father's function is the function of the mediation of the symbolic Law

It is essential to understand the so-called father's function in moral education as the passage from explanations that speak of the »father« and the »mother«, as well as the »absence of the father«, to the concept of the (symbolic) Law.

In the popular book, *Families and How to Survive Them* (Skynner, Cleese 1983), family therapist Robin Skynner writes: »In fact almost all of the families I've seen in child psychiatry, where the child was brought as a *problem*, were mother-dominated. Either that, or completely chaotic« (ibid., p. 196). Having become acquainted with roughly ten families, Skynner complained to the so-

cial worker who was assigning the families to him that »they are all of this kind« (ibid.) and asked whether he could possibly be assigned a different kind of family. The social worker assured him that »she'd been there ten years and they were *all* like that« (ibid.). Skynner states that with this he is trying to say that »research on the *healthiest* families shows that the power in the family is *shared* between the two parents. They work together and make very conscious decisions about who's going to do what. But in all but those healthiest families, if one of them is to be the boss, it does seem more often to work better Šfor the childĆ if it's the father rather than the mother« (ibid.).

In order to attract the broadest possible public the book is written as a dialogue, with a conversation that preserves pre-theoretical discourse. However, in attempting to capture reality in the most appropriate way the book (unintentionally) does actually reveal theoretical questions. The quoted argumentation is paradoxical: on the one hand, we have healthy families that are dominated not by the father but rather by agreement (because power is shared by the parents). How then are we to understand the claim that it is not the father who dominates but rather *agreement* between the parents!? How does »agreement« dominate? On the other hand, we have dysfunctional families that are in this state either because the mother is dominant or because they are simply chaotic (i.e., they are dominated – in the general sense of the term – by no one). What kind of dominance of the mother (which is supposed to differ from that of the father) is being spoken about in this case?

The authors do, of course, treat the so-called Oedipus complex, or the Oedipal triangle. As Skynner and Cleese explain in the book to which we refer, it is when the child begins to grow up and the personality is formed that the father's role is to help the child – who initially establishes him or herself exclusively in relation to the mother, whom the child perceives as »omnipotent« and »all-powerful« (the power over the child also being located in the mother's ability to provide or withhold love) – to separate from the mother by drawing the mother back to him, by demanding »her back from the baby« (cf. ibid., p. 191). In so doing, the father begins to function as »a bridge between the mother and the outside world« (ibid.). In this regard, Skynner believes that the father has »usually a less cosy relationship, but perhaps a more robust, vigorous and stimulating one« (ibid.). The father is supposed to be the one who »by 'drawing the line' when that's necessary – setting limits – he's helping the child to draw the lines on his internal map of the world« (ibid., p. 193). The function of the father is thus supposed to be that he enables the child to recognise that »the Mother isn't running the world, that she has to share power with Father« (ibid., p. 195), and that he later enables the child to discover that the Father »isn't God either« (ibid.). If the father »is doing his fathering job properly, he'll make it clear that he's part of something bigger too and has to fit in like everyone else« (ibid.).

With the thesis that the personality formation of the child in the family proceeds much better »if it's the father rather than the mother, if one of them has to be the boss«, the authors, of course, provide an answer to the very problem of the decline of the father's function (Verhaeghe), that is, »the absence of

the father«, »abduction«, »the breakdown of authority« (cf. Lasch 1992). As they write, »In the early days, we were certainly at fault because we used to blame it all on what we called žcastrating mothers'. Then, when we started seeing the fathers regularly, and seeing more clearly how the families operated, we realised that it was just as much due to the way the fathers opted out of responsibility« (Skynner, Cleese 1983, p. 197).

However, the quoted discourse of Skynner and Cleese (albeit having the advantage of being couched in language that is approachable to a broader audience), together with the above mentioned thesis pose a very basic theoretical question. Due to the fact that it speaks of the intervention of a real father (Father), a question soon arises that is actually also posed by the authors themselves: »Why should the father – the *man* – be any better in drawing lines than the mother« (ibid., p. 193)!? Could not all of this also be undertaken by »someone other than the man« (ibid., p. 201)!? If these questions remain unanswered the understanding persists that »the leadership of the father« is connected to the real father; there remains a quandary with which Cleese (Skynner's collocutor in the dialogue) continues, commenting that he can already hear how the feminists are »sharpening barbs« (ibid., p. 197).²

If there is no conceptual answer to the question, although we could agree with the authors when they write that, for instance: if »so far mother and baby have usually been quite a mutual admiration society«, »the mother may have some difficulty in being sufficiently realistic about the baby's actual virtues and faults« (ibid., p. 192), these are not satisfactory explanations. For instance, what about in the case where the mother is capable of doing this? And how, in this case *does she do this*? Not least, how does the personality formation of the child take place – »what happens« – if there is no father? In one place, of course, Skynner quite clearly indicates the answer, when he says that the function of the father can be undertaken by *a third person*: grandparents, other relatives, good friends, neighbours, teachers, etc. The fact that the »father« is better equipped than the mother for this intervention in the relationship between the child and mother is, therefore, simply because the father is the one who (usually) appears as the third person. This also means that the *function* of the father is not connected to »inherent psychological differences between males and females« (ibid., p. 193). The function is, therefore, some kind of mechanism and intervention of *the Third* as a »structural necessity« in the development of personality.

² In this regard, we can pose certain other questions – questions that may on first view seem superfluous. Supposing that we accept the thesis of the decline of the father's function, can this in fact have any important consequences whatsoever for moral education in the state school, in view of the fact that the vast majority of pedagogical workers are women?! Can the problem, therefore, have any bearing at all on moral education in the state school and on the women who work in the state school? If the thesis concerns not only men, whose father's function is supposed to be in decline, if the father's function has a broader scope, why does the concept nonetheless speak of the *father's* function? Not least, is it not true that the dilemmas and questions in connection with the father's function concern above all the Oedipus complex and the intersubjective *family* relationships in the period related to the preschool child!? Is it not, therefore, the case that the function of the father is without any real weight in consideration of the school conception of education!?

The essential weakness of the discourse in the book referred to is the absence of an answer that is key to the understanding of the concept of the function of the »father«, and of a reason for why the father's function has a broader scope in moral education, a scope that is not linked to the biological male or female gender. This reason can be found, for instance, in the theory of J. Lacan, when he postulates that in the »traditional« patriarchal structure the father functions as the embodiment of the Law, as the mediator of »social norms«, »the rules of the game«. As Žižek pointed out many years ago, the absence of the father as such does not mean his empirical absence but rather that he has not dispatched his father's function and has not functioned as the embodiment of the Law (cf. Žižek 1985; 1987). The notion of the Law essentially changes the scope of the father's function. In place of the thesis of the necessity of »the father taking leadership«, the involvement of the »father« is considered more as the necessity for some kind of intervention in the relationship between mother and child, which in essence concerns the existence of the symbolic Law (or: the Law in the Symbolic, in discourse). Just as by anybody else, this function can (in principle) also be taken on by the solo mother, for instance.

The demand that »the mother establishes the father as the mediator of that which is beyond her law and her caprice« (Lacan) or: the mediation of mediation (double mediation) as the key to the appearance of the symbolic Law

There is no need to justify the claim that kindergarten teachers, irrespective of their gender, can also fulfil this function; thus the kindergarten teacher appears as the Third Person who in relation to the child (for the child) intervenes in the dyad mother-child and functions as the mediator of the symbolic Law. Analysis of the role played by the father and mother in the child's internalisation of the world is important in the context of the school conception of education both because of the question as to how moral education in school will *interface* with the results of »primary socialisation« in the formation of the personality – whether it will continue, support or even undermine these results – as well as the question as to how to establish in this context the authority of the teacher and other professionals, including leadership personnel, in the state school.

Lacan's conceptualisation, however, also provides an insight into another particular moment, which explains the difficulty of moral educational tasks linked with the function of the mediation of the symbolic Law. In order for the symbolic Law to exist for the child or pupil it is not simply necessary for significant Others who mediate the symbolic Law in reality to exist. The difficulty lies primarily in the fact that the symbolic Law requires: (1) a subjective gesture, philosophically speaking, of double mediation (mediation of mediation), and at the same time (2) the existence of the Law in discourse (for more detail on this, see sections 4 and 5 of the present text).

First a clarification of the thesis about the subjective gesture of double me-

diation. In Lacan's theory, too, the preoedipal relationship between the mother and the child is defined as a relationship in which the child »at first feels completely subject to the caprices on which he or she is dependent« (Lacan 2004, p. 18), and insofar as the mother is, of course, a speaking being (and as such connected to the Law) the *mother's law* is »a kind of uncontrolled law«, which for the child »is completely situated (...) in the good or bad mother's will, in the good or bad mother« (ibid.). For the child the maternal preoedipal law is not the universal law but rather the law of caprice, of arbitrariness. On the other hand, according to Lacan »the father enters the game precisely as the bearer of the law, the one who prohibits the object, that is, the mother herself« (ibid., p. 16), and in so doing brings an essentially different dimension of the law – the possibility of its universality. The result is the establishment of the Ideal-Self as an internalised instance of the symbolic Law, as an instance of internalised social norms, of conscience, which is an essential basis of the personality structure in the child if we want moral education in the state kindergarten and school to form the child in terms of personality into an independent, responsible, autonomous being.

Such a situation is evident from Lacan's description of the three steps, or phases, that lead to the disentanglement of the so-called Oedipus complex in the child. In his lecture entitled »Oedipus' Three Phases« (Lacan 2004) he says that in the (first) preoedipal phase the »father's instance« appears in a veiled, or not yet present, form. This is no obstacle to the »father« existing in reality, to his being the bearer of the Law; however, the »symbolic character« of this, as the author points out, is still beyond the child's comprehension.

In the second phase someone must establish themselves as the one who takes something from the »mother«. Here the father (or the other significant Others) already supports the Law, no longer doing so in a veiled way but rather (and this is the essence of the complication) *in such a way that »the mother« appears as a mediator who presents the father as the one who submits her to the Law*. He emphasises that it is essential »that the mother establishes the father as the mediator of that which is beyond her law and her caprice, which is simply beyond the law as such« (ibid. p. 20). In this regard, the key thing is, as Lacan also emphasises, not so much a case of »the personal relationships between the father and mother«, of »the relationships between the mother as a person and the father as a person, but rather of the relationship between the mother and the father's *word* – with the father insofar as that what he says nonetheless does count for something« (ibid., author's emphasis). In connection with this he adds that: »The key of the Oedipus relationship offers us the close connection between the fact that the mother refers to some law that is not hers but belongs to some Other, and the fact that in reality the object of her desire is the comprehensive ownership of the same Other whose law the mother refers to. This means that we must establish as key not so much the relationship to the father but the relationship to the father's word.« (ibid., p. 22).

In the third phase the father is revealed as the one who has the Law in his possession. This is also a result of the Oedipus complex, which, as Lacan says,

is favourable as long as in this third phase there occurs an identification with »the father« who intervenes as the one who represents the Law. This leads to identification with the father and the establishment of the Ideal-Self (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 24-25).

The successful resolution of the Oedipus complex thus demands the double gesture of the break from directness on the part of the significant Other (and this function can be undertaken by anyone), a gesture that (1) releases the child from »directness« in relation to (the mother as) the object of desire, and at the same time (2) connects the child, not directly (to the father) but rather to (the father or the significant Other as) the mediator of the symbolic Law.

Here we therefore have the demand for double mediation, first that of the mother as a mediator of the father, who himself is also »just« a mediator – a mediator of the symbolic Law, the Law that is defined by the fact that it has existence »in the word«, for instance in some norm or rule, in concrete terms.

However, this double mediation can, in fact, be realised by one person – for instance, the mother. The significant Other must behave in such a way that, on the one hand, he or she does not operate simply in the function of satisfying the child's desire (or that the significant Other implements his or her own demand, that he or she does not subjugate him or herself to the child's demand). On the other hand, these behaviours must be based in certain generally established norms and rules in relation to the child.³

Some implications from the analysis of the father's function for the consideration and formation of the school conception of education

The first implication of the father's function as the symbolic Law for the formation of the school conception of education is that moral education whose goal is to attempt to establish the independent, autonomous and responsible being must implement the existence of the symbolic Law in moral education – in other words the *norms* and *rules* implemented by moral educational behaviours in school – as something that is beyond the »possession« of the individual teacher and his or her »caprice«. This is, of course, possible when the pupils have been placed in a social network that is based on clear and pre-established rules that cannot be arbitrarily adapted (or, to use Lacan's terminology, as symbolic Law that exists in discourse, that is, in the Other). This can be achieved in school only with prior agreement and mutual reconciliation (primarily of teachers but also of teachers and parents, with the inclusion of pupils as far as possible), with agreements that are subsequently binding for everyone.

Secondly, Lacan emphasises that the result of the Oedipus complex is depen-

³ The Oedipus complex is, of course, also linked to the constitution of the female or male gender – but that we put aside. In this connection we can refer to the discussion of V. Vuk Godina (1995), who also emphasises the universal significance of the symbolic Law, especially the connection with heterosexuality, both for the female and the male genders.

dent on whether the mother establishes the father as the one who is beyond her law and caprice, which is demonstrated by whether the father's *word* counts for her (which in the patriarchal structure is not questionable, at least not as much as it is in the contemporary world). If the answer is positive the father will gain a place of authority in relation to the child. This has obvious implications for the establishment the authority of teachers in school, although in this case, of course, a broader complex of intersubjective relationships is at work, on which the authority of both the institution and the individual teacher depend. Lacan says: »The problem appears at the point when the father's position is placed under question due to the fact that his word is not the law for the mother« (ibid., p. 23). This explains why »the absence of the father«, or »the breakdown of authority« is not essentially connected with the physical absence of the father, nor in the end is it only the problem of real fathers (or mothers), but rather it is the result of the contemporary relationship of the significant Others to the child in general, insofar as they behave in relation to the child in such a way that for the child their word, or the word of others, »is not the law«, if we can put it this way. The physical presence of the parent cannot take the place of the essential intervention that must be on the level of discourse, of the symbolic Law, whose bearer is the norms/rules that are missing and the behaviours appropriate to them.

Furthermore, in the school the problem appears when the established position of the teacher is under question, but not simply due to the fact that for the child the teacher's word »is not the law« – this is actually just a consequence of a more complex situation. Firstly, permissiveness in relation to the child (about which we will say more below), along with, for instance, theories that attempt to build motivation in the pupil by stimulating so-called inner motivation, can place the teacher in a role in which, in an effort to motivate the pupil internally, he or she starts to take on (or simply adopts) the role of the satisfier of the pupils' desires or pleasure. Lacan's theory points out that for the successful resolution of the preoedipal relationship between the mother and the child, which tears the child away from the logic of functioning purely according to the principle of pleasure, the mother herself must first appear as the mediator of the symbolic Law. Later, too, when it is a case of building upon these relationships, this means that in relation to the pupils the teacher must fundamentally appear from the position of the mediator of the symbolic Law (and in so doing he or she can also lead the pedagogical process and a sovereign way), not from the position of the satisfier of the pupils' desires or pleasure. Arriving at the logic of functioning according to the principle of the pleasure of the child is of no benefit to the formation of his/her independence and individuality. Furthermore, it undermines the pedagogical process if the pupils, acting according to their own caprice or according to the principle of pleasure, begin to dictate the course of the pedagogical process.

The next difficult point concerns the very existence of the symbolic Law; namely, that the mediation of the law as such establishes itself in speech and discourse, on the discursive level (which expresses Lacan's idea that in the struc-

ture of the Oedipus complex the father's position is placed under question in the case that *his word* is not the law for the mother). In other words, the symbolic Law of which we are speaking is situated »in the word«, in the sense that it is always »mediated« by speech and discourse, which (and for the school this is crucial) also includes the relationship between the teacher and the other teachers (and the relationship of the parents to the teacher's word and behaviours). Here again, similarly to in the family, it is not so much a case of the personal relationships between the individual teachers as of the attitude that the individual teacher demonstrates towards other teachers through his or her own attitude towards and use of the *norms and rules* according to which they behave as teachers at a particular school.

This explains the appearance of »the breakdown of authority« in the contemporary relationship of adults to children, or of teachers to pupils, as a consequence of the behaviour of the bearers of authority, when they behave such that for themselves their word »is not the law«, and that the word of others, too, counts for »nothing«, to state it rather drastically.

With regard to the relationship between narcissism and permissiveness, it is worth pointing out that Lasch (Lasch 1992), too, does not attribute permissiveness in moral education only to the consequences of the psychological mechanisms connected with narcissism. For the Slovene sphere, permissive behaviours that function as such, albeit detached from narcissistic patterns, are perhaps even more characteristic than permissiveness connected with narcissistic patterns that lead to so-called pathological narcissism. This has probably received too little emphasis in discussions, a fact that can be attributed to Lasch's theorising itself, which is derived from an analysis of American culture and which emphatically weaves the concept of pathological narcissism into the analysis. However, Lasch also quotes Rogow, for instance, who finds that American parents who in their behaviour with young people are alternatively »permissive and wavering«, »find that it is easier to achieve conformity if they submit to bribery than if they deal with the emotional agitation associated with repressing the child's demands« (ibid.). In other words, even just the principle of pleasure can lead parents to permissive behaviours in relation to the child: when they are with the child they do everything in order not to have to »deal with emotional agitation«, especially the kind of agitation that could be a consequence of the child's resistance in relation to their demands. As Lasch adds, »in this way they weaken the child's initiative and prevent him or her from developing self-mastery or self-discipline « (ibid.).

The absence of the Law can be a consequence of a specific subjective uncertainty of the parents (of the significant Others) in relation to the child. Rose, who is quoted by Lasch in his analysis, writes: »Some parents, for example, are incapable of such things as putting the child to bed if the child protests or is not able to contain his or her aggressiveness...« (ibid., p. 194). Obviously the point here is not so much connected with the *contents* of the norm or rule (when and how the parents put the child to bed), as with the inability, the incapacity, of the parents to *implement* a particular norm or rule in relation to the child. This also

holds for cases where in relation to the child the demand is »declared«, where the parents are aware of what they »want« or what they »should do« – they nevertheless »give in« and do not insist on the demand set, they do not oppose the child when he or she resists. Similar situations can arise in school, such as when practice or repetition must be undertaken by the pupils (homework, for instance). In these cases it is therefore crucial that teachers and parents do not give in, that they insist on the tasks being completed.

On this point contemporary families and other moral educational influences (such as moral education in kindergarten) probably function in quite different ways, which has an impact on the fact that on entering primary school pupils arrive with various levels of personality formation.

In the formation and implementation of the school conception of education this demands taking as a point of departure the view that it is necessary to strive for a situation in which the teachers' *word* is – metaphorically speaking – the law; a situation in which the words and behaviours of the teacher have the support of other teachers and of parents. In so doing the authority of the teacher establishes itself and this is (amongst others) a path by which educational measures also gain validity (or with time become increasingly less necessary, increasingly less inefficient). However, this is a realistic demand only in the case (once again we come to the same point) that the school – in face of the differences that exist between teachers, between teachers and parents, etc. – reflects upon moral educational behaviours, that it attempts to reach binding agreement, and that words are supported by appropriate behaviours. It is obvious that this cannot be an undemanding, simple process; nonetheless, it is a process with which it is necessary to engage.

As we will demonstrate in the continuation, the existence of the symbolic Law (and the father's function) in the traditional structure of the social matrix (social norms) was able to be maintained due to the simple fact that (or the extent to which) social norms were not subject to question, which today is no longer so self-evident. This once again establishes the demand that in the formation of the conception of education it is necessary to form and accept agreement with regard to moral educational behaviours, enabling the discourse and behaviours of one teacher to be supported by that of other teachers.

The function of the father as the symbolic Law exists (or does not exist) in speech and utterances (in discourse)

In the contemporary world the existence of the symbolic Law is undermined both by the changed relationship between the sexes and by the relativisation of social or cultural norms. This must be reflected in the formation of the school conception of education and, of course, solutions must be found to remove the difficulties that can arise in connection with the authority of the teacher.

When, for instance, Berger and Luckmann write that »primary socialisation causes in the child the gradual generalisation from the roles and attitudes

of the significant Others to roles and attitudes in general« (Berger, Luckmann 1988, p. 124), in the clarification they provide a concrete example in which we cannot overlook the fact that their view of the child's gradual generalisation of roles and attitudes – not by coincidence – also includes a very characteristic moral educational situation from the viewpoint of the formation of the personality. They write that »in the internalisation of rules there is gradual progress from 'mummy is angry with me' to 'mummy is always angry with me when I spill the soup'. Due to the fact that the other significant Others (father, grandmother, older sister, etc.) support the mother's negative attitude towards spilling the soup the generality of the rule subjectively expands. The decisive point is when the child recognises that everyone is against the spilling of soup and generalises the rule as: 'A person does not spill soup'« (ibid.).

The question as to whether the significant Other establishes his or her relationship to the child through norms or rules conceived in this way becomes even more important as the child grows, when he or she begins to notice that the mother's attention is not directed only towards him or her but also towards others, and when he or she is able to express his or her power (aggression) in a more determined way. The content of the social and cultural norms that enable him or her the basic functioning in human society will be mastered and adopted by the child as he or she grows up; above all, the relationships with the significant Others will influence his or her personality formation.

Thus Berger and Luckmann's example does not only describe the situation of the child's generalisation and adoption of social roles and attitudes in the sense of the *contents* of the rules, norms, values, etc., that are mediated by the significant Others, such as the concrete norm that »one does not spill one's soup«. When we have a situation like the one described in which the other significant Others also support the mother's negative attitude towards the spilling of soup this first signifies what the child with time realises: in relation to him or her the mother does not arbitrarily establish demands, or rather that *the mother herself is also subject to the rule*. The assumption in this situation, as described by the authors, is the general, universal validity of the norm or rule – in other words, the Law. They describe the moment of the operation of the father's function, the consequence of which is that the »father«, as the mediator of the Law, intervenes in the previously »uncurtailed« relationship of the child with the mother (which occurs to the extent that the significant Others actually behave in this way in relation to the particular child). In so doing the father not only contributes to the gradual adoption of various social norms and rules but also to the continuous formation of the child's personality.

In the example of Berger and Luckmann we can see that when a particular norm holds as universally valid (for the mother, the father, the grandparents, etc.) and unquestionable the consequence is *self-evidence* in the behaviour of adults in relation to the child. This »self-evidence« regarding the correctness of the behaviours of the significant Others in relation to the child is most often not connected with rational reflection and foundation but rather with the absence of doubt on the part of adults with regard to the correctness of the norm, which is a

consequence of the fact that the significant Others themselves adopt it as their own in the process of socialisation. However, it is precisely the certainty and unquestionability that marks the following of the contents of social norms that can be characteristic for a primary society (for the life of some tribe remote from the rest of the world, which lives in the closed circle of its own social subjectivity towards itself) but that no longer exists in contemporary societies. Furthermore, is not to be expected that we could, if we wanted to, »create« a society in which this was not the case, i.e., that social and specific cultural norms in these globalised societies would not be subjected to various influences and changes.

However, if we accept that in contemporary society there cannot be entirely unquestionable social and cultural norms and rules in terms of content, is an inevitable consequence of this fact also the failure of the father's function, insofar as it is the mediation of the Law connected to the universality of norms, to the question as to whether in fact in relation to the child these norms are implemented as valid for everyone?

In principle the answer is, of course, negative. The realisation of the relativity of norms in society, insofar as it is already present, *in itself* does not lead to the adult individual not respecting a moral educational model in relation to the child according to which the demands placed upon the child are presented and established in the form (for the child) of generally valid norms or rules that are implemented as such. However, moral education in such a society faces a new challenge: insofar as even in the environment of the primary society the child is placed in relationships in which there is not just one significant Other who »decides« about norms and rules, and that consequently there are no entirely unquestionable social norms/rules *in terms of content*, the demand for the child to be able to recognise the »general« validity of norms and rules that the significant Others transmit to the child obliges the significant Others to *agree upon* the norms and rules that will subsequently be implemented in relation to the child.⁴

A similar situation holds for the kindergarten and school. Here the process of the formation of *agreements* about the norms and rules that all of the teachers subsequently implement in their behaviours in relation to the pupils is more complex. For agreements whose norms or rules can be established as common, those which everyone can be expected to uphold on the level of behaviours, it is necessary to reflect the fact that pupils in the state school can come from various ethnic, religious and other difference-generating environments. Here the question of the specific cultural norms of the majority is particularly sensitive, as in moral education in the state school it is necessary to ensure that the pupil who stands out from the majority in any way whatsoever is not excluded, that he or she is not in one way or another marginalised, ignored, subject to inequalities (for more on this see Kovač Šebart, Krek 2003, 2005, 2007a, 2007b).

⁴ With this we do not want to say that there are no longer any unquestionable, generally valid norms or rules, or that all rules must or could be entirely rationally justified.

The reflective establishment of the function of the symbolic Law, of »the point«, that mediates norms or rules (the Law)

A further reason for the reproduction of the father's function in the conditions in which contemporary families operate not proceeding in family moral education in the same way as in the traditional patriarchal family lies in the fact of changed interpersonal relationships insofar as they are influenced by social models of gender roles, or relationships between genders. In the traditional patriarchally structured family the mother herself must also take care of the maintenance of the father's function.⁵ Such a situation is evident from the description of the three steps or phases that in the child lead to the disentanglement of the so-called Oedipus complex, as described by Lacan. Of course, these structures can also be complex – we only need to recall the analyses of the so-called maternal Superego and the paternal Superego (Žižek 1987, Šebart 1990; Kovač Šebart 2001; 2002). However, here we are not dealing with the forms and excesses regarding the law in the traditional family or in the school context of the past, but rather with the question of the lack of the symbolic Law in discourse in the contemporary world.

The self-evidence (unquestionability) of the *universality* of the rule in the traditional patriarchal family structure is based upon the norm that the father is the one who »establishes rules«, a norm that is internalised in the process of moral education. Even in the case that the »master« (in terms of the interpersonal relationships of a particular family) is in fact the mother, in her attitude towards the child the mother establishes and maintains the appearance of the existence of the »father«, or »someone« (this role can also be represented by more abstract instances, such as by invoking God) who »establishes the rules« beyond her, and in so doing maintains the *function of the father*. If we can assume that there has been a shift in the subjective understanding of interpersonal relationships between genders in the contemporary family, whereby the mother and father no longer understand that one or the other is (self-evidently) superior or inferior simply because they are a woman or a man, this means that on the level of family patterns it is no longer predetermined who (the mother or the father) in the family »establishes the rules«, who is the »master«. It is precisely in the light of these changes in the relationships between the genders that it has become important for both parents to equally retain the function of the father (the mediator of the symbolic Law) in relation to the child. This means that in relation to the child they both support each other in the function of the subject who establishes the rule for the child or, put more generally, that the significant Others mutually support this function.

If for any reason there exists within the family a struggle for dominance – if, for example, the parents impugn each other in the function of the father

⁵ With somewhat different argumentation Lasch also finds that in the American family not only the father is »absent« but in a sense »that her dominance is felt primarily in the child's fantasies (where the father also plays an active role), not in everyday life«, »the American mother is also an absent parent« (Lasch 1992, p. 204).

(»the bearer of the rule«) – and this is transferred to the relationship with the child, such behaviours most likely have an influence upon the moral education of the child and the development of his or her personality structure. These processes undermine the existence of the function of the father in the sense that the child is exposed to the implementation of now one now another rule – there is a lack of the previously described situation of the constant repetition of the same by all of the significant Others, which ensures that the child can recognise the universally valid rules behind the concrete demands, consequently the establishment of the »point« that could represent the bearer of the rules becomes questionable.

This in itself does not mean that the moral education of parents is based on caprice, insofar as each of the significant Others in his or her own way implements with the child specific (in reality to a certain extent different) norms and rules. In so doing they enable a process of identification with the bearer of these messages, an internalisation and adoption of the mediated norms and rules. As long as in relation to the child the moral education of the significant Others is based on the validity of norms and rules, even though the child perceives differences between the way these norms and rules are implemented, this conveys the child to the field of the validity of social rules and in a certain way draws him or her away from a position in which he or she would be exposed to the »incomprehensible«, capricious demands of the significant Other – on the condition that in so doing the significant Others also provide resistance to the child's aggression and self-will.

It is true, however, that such behaviours at the same time open up room for contradictory messages (in a period when the child is not even yet capable of distinguishing between them) and consequently also room for the child's manipulation of the demands of the significant Others (firstly, of course, in the case of the parents, if they allow the child to do so as part of, for instance, their struggle for dominance over one another).⁶

In view of the described moral education in family environments, and also the moral educational influences in kindergarten, there can be diverse influences on the formation of the structure of the personality, resulting in significant differences between pupils by the time they enter primary school. However, this is not a reason for the formation of the conception of education of the state school, when it is a case of a general approach, to shy away from moral education based on rules or norms that are valid for everyone in an effort to adapt to the differences between pupils – quite the opposite. One of the moral educational principles must be to put in place efforts, in an even more reflective and considered way (taking into account the value basis of moral education in the state school), to build the establishment of rules and norms, as well as devoting equal attention to how teachers and parents implement the agreements in their behaviours.

⁶ A specific trait of the personality structure can be understanding norms simply as tools for the manipulation of others.

The implementation of the norm/rule (the Law)

It is characteristic of the permissive moral educational model that it causes, even in the case when the significant Others are well aware of which norms and rules they seek to implement in terms of content (!), the relationship of the significant Others to the child to lack the appearance of the Law. In situations when the child exerts his or her own will permissive significant Others give in. There is a lack of intrusion of the child's »own« borders »from outside«. This not only conveys a message to the child that in the moral educational relationship he is the master, with which the child retains an unrealistic conception of him or herself and of his or her capabilities, but it also leads to an understanding that the symbolic matrix of the social norms and rules that are followed by a the significant Others »do not count« for the child, which results in the child's not being able to take on board his or her own limitations.

As we have already established, it is possible that due to diverse moral educational influences during the preschool period significant differences in personality formation can appear between pupils prior to entering primary school. In spite of these differences, which have an impact on the possibility of recognising, accepting and following the symbolic Law, the teacher must strive to place (all) pupils in an environment in which they will (be able to) recognise that the demands of the teachers are not established arbitrarily, that the »rules of the game« apply to everyone, including the person who mediates or enforces these rules. The point is thus that the introduction of the symbolic Law in moral education demands of the teacher a »passage to action«: both in terms of functioning through the generally valid rules and norms (through »the Law in the Other«) and the *implementation*⁷ of these rules and norms on the part of the teacher or the parents in behaviours in relation to the pupils. However, various aspects of the »passage to action« in moral education present a problem that demands separate interpretation.⁸

⁷ As Dolar writes, »the subject cannot arrive at self-reflection simply via the path of cognition; in order to come to 'self-knowledge' he or she must at some point abandon a contemplative, cognitive, purely theoretical attitude and take a step towards 'practical action'« (Dolar 1992, p. 121).

⁸ Here we must bear in mind that the father's function as the symbolic Law can also be lacking in the conditions of the traditional patriarchal family: in the case of dominant mothers who maintain complete control over the child, but with violence, drastic punishment, humiliation and similar behaviours from which there is an absence of the implementation of the norm or rule, and which serve only the mother's domination of the child. Thus both in the case of the apparently »frail«, permissive, protective mother (or father), and in that of the dominant, controlling and punishing mother, as well as in some combination of these patterns, the problem does not lie in the fact that the real father is simply ousted from moral education, but primarily in the ousting of the implementation and enactment of generally valid norms/rules (= the Law) in relation to the child. Something similar also holds true for the repressive/totalitarian model of authority in school.

Conclusion: the father's function, authority and the formation of the state school conception of education

It is, of course, possible to establish the question of authority in a different way. We can proceed from the thesis that in the pedagogical profession there is no real dilemma as to whether the teacher should have authority or not (cf. Kroflič 1997, p. 317-399) – the teacher should gain authority over the pupils in any case. The rejection of authoritarianism is supposed to first prompt the question as to *what type*, or *what form* of authority is appropriate to the role that the teacher has in the state school. Thus after an analytical examination of the history or theory of forms of authority in moral education (apostolic authority, Kant's symbolic authority of reason, Rousseau's hidden authority of the educational environment), Kroflič endorses the concept of the self-limitation of authority as a suitable form of authority in the postmodern era (ibid.).

Kroflič's analysis of forms of authority enables an outline of certain methodological differences in the conceptualisation of authority. In contrast to the approach by which the concept of authority is outlined through an analysis of forms of authority – whether these forms are considered through history or as the theories of individual authors – the notion of the father's function in this analysis of authority is derived from the concept of structure, and therefore does not rely so much on description, or on the possibility of an exhaustive description of the behaviours that would need to be undertaken in order to proceed in accordance with a particular concept of authority. Nor is the concept connected directly to a particular historical form of authority, but rather in its point of departure it establishes the thesis that, in moral education and in the relationship to the child or pupil in general, the parent, the caregiver, the teacher (the significant Others) »undertake some function«, some work; in concrete terms: *to mediate the father's function*. This perspective in principle opens up the *possibility* that in forms of the implementation of authority – in spite of the differences that have appeared throughout history and that could be analytically differentiated (although here we leave this aside) – the implementation of the father's function has always been »at work« in the social matrix (in the norms on which moral educational behaviours are based) and in the moral educational behaviours of the significant Others. Whether or not this has been the case, the thesis about »the collapse of the father's function« indicates a certain radical shift in the social matrix and in the moral educational behaviour it is based on. Of course, the story about this, as already indicated by Verhaeghe, has not yet concluded. In this regard, the role that will be played by moral education in the state school is far from insignificant.

It is precisely for this reason that we emphasise the fact that in the formation of the conception of education of the state school one of the points of departure must be that pupils need to be placed in a social network that is based on completely clear and pre-established rules that cannot be arbitrarily adapted. It is only possible to achieve this in the school through mutual reconciliation and by reaching agreement that is subsequently binding for everyone. In the forma-

tion and implementation of the school conception of education this demands the point of departure that it is necessary to strive for a situation where, metaphorically speaking, the word of the teacher is »the law«, and where the words and behaviours of the teacher are supported by other teachers and by parents. In this way the authority of the teacher and of the institution is established. However, this is a realistic demand only in the case that the school engages with the difficult process of reflecting on moral educational behaviours, and through this attempts to achieve binding agreement, subsequently supported by appropriate behaviours. As already stated, this cannot be an undemanding, simple process, but it is nonetheless necessary to embark upon it.

In this regard the argumentation also indicates the sense in which the doubt that Kroflič expresses towards the role of the »symbolic order of laws« (Kroflič 2008, pp. 68-69) in the moral development of the individual and in the moral educational operation of the state school is not aimed at the correct target; namely, »personal closeness, encouraging friendly relations, an inclusive atmosphere and the implementation of inductive logic in the perception of the damaging consequences of morally contentious behaviour« (ibid., p. 69) is not, and cannot be, an alternative to the role of the symbolic Law in moral education – as the author's argumentation could also be understood. The validity and implementation of the symbolic Law is a *condition* of the establishment of an inclusive school culture in school – and for the establishment of an »inclusive atmosphere«, as Kroflič writes, it is undoubtedly worth striving. The function of the implementation of the symbolic Law is, on the one hand, that moral education is established according to certain »rules of the game« that are valid in school for both the pupils and the teachers. The rules are what protects the pupil from the »caprice« of the teacher. Of course, these rules establish borders for the pupil, but they establish the same borders for the teachers, and are also binding for them, thereby providing the child with a sense of security. On the other hand, an essential aspect is that this enables the pupil to identify with the significant Others, and that through this mechanism of identification the child internalises the »rules of the game« – the Law. The process in which the individual integrates the demands of the environment, structured in the symbolic instance of the Ideal-Self, forms itself on the basis of symbolic identification with the bearer of the Law.

Therefore, both the teacher's word and his or her behaviours must also occupy the place of the mediator of the universal Law. These processes in the formation of the basic personality of the pupils, which must be built upon in the state school by moral education, are one of the reasons that moral education in the state school – whose basic goal is to develop the child into an autonomous, independent, responsible person – must respect all of the valid (= universal) rules. If in moral education the limitations, the borders, established for the child are not based on norms and rules that are in principle valid for all pupils, the teacher's demand gains (or rather retains) a non-universal, capricious, tyrannical character – something that has already been established numerous times (cf. Šebart 1990, Kovač Šebart 2002; 2005).

A key factor, therefore, is how these processes, which also influence the formation of the personality of the pupils, proceed.

(1) Either they proceed in such a way that the process of forming the personality of the child leads to the establishment of an instance of the symbolic Law, to the establishment of the Ideal-Self as the mediator of internalised social norms, thus to a process whose result is the formation of an inner guide, an inner-binding Law, which is a condition for personality traits to develop in the child that will enable him or her, as he or she grows up, to develop into an autonomous, responsible person.

(2) Or they proceed in such a way that the significant Others – whether due to an excessive, cruel, implementation of the rules (with violence), or due to the absence of rules (the Law) in moral education – function with regard to moral education in a specific way: such that in the structure of the child's personality in one way or another there is retained the original trauma of »external constraint« and a direct dependence on the Others, as well as an inability to resist.

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